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# POLITICAL IDEALS

THEIR NATURE AND  
DEVELOPMENT

AN ESSAY

BY

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## PREFACE

THE thesis I propose to maintain is that modern politics is governed by the conceptions men have of a state of things which would be better than the present. It is my first purpose, therefore, to discover the meaning of some of those conceptions. I shall call them 'Ideals'. These only among the many facts of politics I propose to study, acknowledging at the same time that they cannot be studied in isolation from other facts. And secondly I propose to show of each such ideal that it is an inheritance the value of which we cannot estimate unless we know its early development. As we use the mechanical inventions of the past so we are influenced by what the past thought desirable.

As we have inherited the use of forks, so we have inherited the use of such words as Liberty and Nationalism. The material resources which we find round us are not any more definite, although to the unseeing eye they may be more obvious, than the intangible ideals we accept.

Two things are implied in the study of politics—first the statement of facts, and secondly the judgement as to whether such facts are to be approved

or not. The facts I shall only indicate as a basis for the judgements which imply that they might be developed or abolished with advantage: for my interest here is only in the ethical or moral standard which embodies itself in a political ideal; and of the past living in the present I shall notice only that element which provoked desire and has left us either achievement (the realized ideal) or a powerful motive force for making the present into a better future.

This is not, then, a history of political theory. Had it been, I should have given a greater space to Plato and Bodin, and I should at least have mentioned Kant. I propose to confine attention to what we may call more popular conceptions and to such popular conceptions only as were active in movements of reform.

I owe an apology to historians and to philosophers: to historians, first, because of the long period over which it has been necessary to pass. It is so obviously impossible to describe adequately a long development of ideas in a short space that I need hardly say I am not attempting it. But I hope that I have not lost historical proportion. The reason for dealing with so many different historical periods is simply that I could not explain otherwise what I take to be the meaning and value of an ideal. Such a reality must be watched in many different phases if its nature is to be understood, and one is



compelled, therefore, to touch upon the careers of many different nations in many different periods.

To philosophers I owe an apology for not stating more clearly my own conception of the nature of society. My debt to Sidgwick will be obvious ; but because I disagree almost entirely with his governing conception, my debt to Mr. Bosanquet will not be so obvious, although it is no less real. It is difficult to label the attitude I have adopted. It is Individualism if that only implies the denial of the existence of any Social Soul or Higher Unity in the form of a Super-person : but it is not Individualism if that implies that there could be an Individual without a Society. I do not suppose that human Individuals are distinct *in the same way* as are bodies in space ; but their union does not seem to me to be that of subordination to anything higher or nobler or more real.

The limits of my subject, however, make it impossible to establish any philosophical theory ; and I have confined attention to what is only one of the facts to which I should look as evidence for the nature of society.

The subject is apposite in view of the present war ; but it was not studied with any controversial purpose or any ephemeral interest. As Burke said long ago, so now, ' It is with an armed doctrine that we are at war ' : and undoubtedly this is the time to examine the ideals of our opponents and of our

own tradition. I have, therefore, made some references to books which are unimportant as political philosophy because they throw light upon present tendencies.

As for the practical use of what follows, I can only say that when the problems are complex it is all the more necessary for fundamentals to be considered. An artificial and misleading simplicity is often given to practical problems because they are considered in isolation; but problems solved by such rule of thumb are likely to need solving again very soon, and it may in the end be the simplest and the most practical plan to consider general principles as a ground for solving particular difficulties.

C. D. B.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE HISTORY OF IDEALS

### A. Purpose of History.

THE past is so entangled with the present that we cannot understand the political situation in civilized countries without continual reference to situations no longer in existence. To speak platitude then—History is an explanation of how we come to be doing what we usually do. We are interested in what has occurred chiefly because we want to understand what is occurring; and we want this again chiefly in order to influence what will occur. Thus unless history gives us some practical knowledge it is useless. It must show us how to change the present into a better future, by showing how the past became the present.

But this chief task of the historian, to keep his interest in the future in spite of his knowledge of the past, is the chief difficulty in the study of history. For as the past may absorb one's attention and take one's eyes away from the future, the mind may be entangled in the jungle of dead ages. The historian may lose his way out of it, and even delight in the roots and undergrowth which keep him from the open. He may become a pamphleteer for some form of political 'restoration'.<sup>1</sup> And perhaps the only method of avoiding this and of keeping the purpose of history clear is to regard

<sup>1</sup> Like Chateaubriand or de Maistre or various ecclesiastical historians of the Mediaeval period.

the past as what it once was, a future, and to think of the change as moving in front of us rather than as all over.

This, then, must be the meaning we give to the idea of development with respect to political conceptions of what is worth having. The present situation must be our central interest; and if there is any century of more interest to us than the twentieth it is the twenty-first. We look back in order to look forward. We must discover the nature of the material with which we have to deal and the method by which it is modified, by tracing its earlier modifications. A certain amount of good, along with evil, exists in the present relations of men and states: that good is in part an old ideal realized, in part a basis for further progress. And arising out of present evils are certain conceptions of what would be better, which have had perhaps a recent origin. All these we must understand in order to direct the forces involved in political life in the channels of which we approve. But the history of such conceptions has not been separately treated.

### B. Kinds of History.

There have been many methods of studying the past development of the race. Summarily we may count them as four: there are (1) *Date-and-Fact History*, (2) *Heroic History*, (3) *Democratic History*, and (4) *Naturalistic History*.

(1) As to *Date-and-Fact History*, the recording of events by reference to their date has a certain value. It marks the uniqueness of each event and conclusively proves that history never repeats itself. It is a mausoleum of dead issues.



The bare list of dates and events, however, which used to be called history is no explanation of the present and no guide to the future. It is no guide for understanding our present habits to discover whom the kings married or how many battles were fought. The old-fashioned history was a mere list of exceptions, and for that reason could be no explanation of the common life of the present, and no suggestion could come from it as to a better future.

As a list of exceptions history may have a certain romantic interest such as attaches to the 'facts' in a newspaper; but it is quite clear that date-and-fact history is a sort of journalism. Now the peculiarity of a newspaper is that whereas it professes to give us an account of current events, it confines its attention to what is exceptional. Murder, divorce, and party-politics are discussed in detail; but every one knows that human life does not usually consist of such facts. If it did, they would have no interest. The more common the event the less interesting it is; so that we cannot complain if our newspapers do not remark on the fact that the sun rises, or that the vast majority live happily and do not commit murder, and are singularly untroubled by political crises. And yet it is upon such commonplaces that progress depends, and by such uninteresting generalities that we may best explain our present situation. I am not complaining against journalism, but only against that kind of journalism which pretends to be a history of the past. Still more ludicrous is the supposition that newspapers will make it easier to write history; since the only advantage to be derived from them will probably be that

future historians will feel certain that nothing mentioned in a newspaper has much value as a record of the current life of the time. The savage notices a thunderstorm and trembles at the power it implies; but he is ignorant of the electrical currents which are always passing over the surface of the earth, modifying history profoundly, and evincing much more power than a mere flash of lightning. The newspaper reader remains a savage in mistaking the exceptional for the important.

I do not, of course, deny that men are much influenced by exceptional events. It may make an immense difference that a murderer is caught and punished; but too great a prominence is given to the exceptional in date-and-fact history. Men are far more influenced, although less obviously, by the commonplaces of their time, since most of the events of to-day are what they are because of most of the events of yesterday. And even in that most precious fragment of history which is contained in our own personal memory of what has happened to us, we recognize that we are what we are now because of the common things and the ordinary events of our childhood. So also in the record of human progress it may be uninteresting to notice that parents loved their children even in the fourth century or that some men became wiser by being taught even in the twelfth; but, indeed, such facts have had more influence in producing the present situation than the sack of Rome by the barbarians or the misfortunes of the scholar Abelard.

A history of the commonplace would probably be impossible; but the real history of the past, if it is to be an explanation of how the present came

to be what it is, must contain far more of the general atmosphere of dead ages than of the exceptional events of those times.

History is peculiar in being at once a science, aiming at a general knowledge of similar facts in all times, and a romance or a record of what cannot possibly occur again. Thus it is true to say both that 'history repeats itself' and that no event can ever be repeated. The scientific historians lose sight of the individual instance in dealing with the general law; and the romantic or literary historians forget that there is a law expressed in every unique event.<sup>1</sup> Dates and facts have their places in the record, but not the chief places. And speaking generally of the greater historians, date-and-fact history is now most properly subordinated.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Now there have been since the days of date-and-fact history three distinct methods for expressing the inner force of development in what has occurred. One is Carlyle's method—that of recording the adventures of Great Men. We may call this *Heroic History*. The Great Man is regarded as an ultimate, inexplicable ground for understanding what happened in his day. But clearly the Great Man is often the voice of his time; he is what he is because of the people among whom he lives. And although there is reason in Heroic History—for the appearance of a Great Man

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Trevelyan's *Clio*. The plea there made for vivid writing may easily be misused as a denial of 'law' in history. This is not the place for a philosophical discussion, but clearly every event is at once (a) unique and (b) like some other, i. e. an instance of a law.

<sup>2</sup> Buckle (I. v.) speaks of 'the most trifling and miserable details: personal anecdotes' with which men 'inadequate to the task' of writing history have filled their works.

at a certain date cannot be explained—yet it does not render all the force of development. There was introduced, therefore, another method of historical reasoning, which referred chiefly to the habits and customs of the mass of men. We may call this

(3) *Democratic History*. The ‘people’ of the past were studied as the ultimate explanation of the ‘people’ as they are to-day. ‘Social life’ became the leading interest in the discovery of the past, and we were taught how our forefathers ate and spoke, and even what clothes they wore. Here again, however, there was something omitted: the bare description of what men did in the past does not quite explain why men do *differently* now. The explanation of the likeness of past and present was to be found in Democratic History, but not any explanation of the difference between them.

(4) A fourth method, that of *Naturalistic History*, has been to treat of what may be called ‘natural’ causes, and undoubtedly much of the change in civilization has been due to the influence of country, climate, or race.<sup>1</sup> To these causes must be added the equally ‘natural’ forces studied in at least the older forms of economics. Laws of supply and demand, of market value and the rest, operate upon society quite inevitably, and much of the explanation of the present may be found in them. The discovery of the operation of nature on man and of economic law led to the exaggeration of the value in this method of history; but it has since become clear that it is inadequate to explain the whole situation: for man is not altogether con-

<sup>1</sup> Buckle may be taken as an example, and, in the economic sphere, Karl Marx.

cerned with food and clothing. The practical man indeed knows 'the price of everything and the value of nothing', but no man is altogether practical.

(5) There is a fifth method. It is the study of what men *hoped* to do, and may be labelled the *History of Ideals*.<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to imply that any one of these methods excludes the others; but I do assert that, if you want to understand the present in order to direct the future, you will have to grasp not only what great men did and how common men lived, but also what all men hoped for. Some of what they hoped for they actually achieved; but even then their hope was the life and soul of their achievement: and one cannot understand the meaning of what actually happened unless one appreciates what men wanted to happen. In so far as the events of the past were influenced by the wills of our forefathers, great and small, in that far it is necessary to understand the ideals which guided their wills. Not all the present will be understood by reference to the ideals of the past, since the course of human history is not altogether governed by the force of human will; but in part it is so governed, and in that part we shall understand it by the study of ideals.

Still further, there were many things which men in the past hoped to do and never did. That hope is an explanation of the difference in what we now do, often because what our forefathers dreamed of has come true after they have passed away. It is in this sense that the *History of Ideals* explains the difference between past and present. The present was in the past as a hope, a longing, an ideal: and the dream which never came true may

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I for a closer definition of the word 'Ideal.'

be just as important an influence in the present as the plan which was actually successful.<sup>1</sup>

For the same reason the History of Ideals is the best guide for understanding how the present may be changed into a better future : for the future is in the present as the present was once in the past, as a hope or an ideal. To shorten the vision of historical prophecy, we know what our individual future will probably be, at least in part, by considering what we want it to be. Thus we say that if we are to have any future at all it shall be one of financial affluence or of intelligent enjoyment. Our desire may be ineffective if our ideal is not based upon a reasoned consideration of the conditions in which we live ; but in some sense we may truly say that our plans influence our future.

Now just as our present wishes influence our individual futures, so the wishes of the past have moulded the present. And as far back as we choose to look we shall find this same influence at work. There are laws to be discovered too. The desire of the Athenians for liberty made the Athens of Socrates : that again civilized Rome and the Roman admiration for order made Europe one. To understand such influences is a help in understanding how our plans of reform will probably be most effective. For, to give one instance of a general conclusion which may be drawn, no ideal has ever been achieved in the exact form in which it was at first conceived.

<sup>1</sup> An example may be found in the effort to form workmen's unions in the fourteenth century, an effort continually resisted by Parliament and King, cf. 34 Edward III. c. 9, 'totes alliances & covignes des Maceons & Carpenters & congregacions Chapitres ordinances & sermentz entre eux faite ou affaires soient desore anientiz & anullez de tout'.

**Method of History of Ideals.**

But how can we study an ideal? It seems intangible—as beautiful perhaps as a rainbow, but as difficult to grasp, always moving away from us as we approach the place where it seemed to be. Again, an ideal is the subject-matter for so much rhetoric that nearly every ideal is obscured by the praise which has been bestowed upon it. And yet I think we may be able so to concentrate our attention upon the effects of an ideal that we may in the end appreciate what it meant to those whom first it moved. We can discover what extinct animals once existed on the earth by the study of fossils, and there are fossils left by past ideals in the midst of the common earth of present custom. These fossils are to be found in language. Many a word which was once the body of an enthusiasm, the shell of a passion, has become only a commonplace. Take, for example, words like Liberty or Fraternity: one is still almost living, the other has become rather vague and stilted. But even Liberty has not that vigorous life in it which it once had, except perhaps in the mouth of some enthusiast who has not yet become petrified into a politician. ‘Liberty’ in the majority of public speeches has become a commonplace which has to be brought in, which may be given a conventional reverence, but which is in most cases only an empty sound. Every one says ‘Liberty’: and when every one says it, no one means anything very definite by it. Words were invented to express disagreement, and their best days are over when no one hates them; for when no one hates a word, no one loves it passionately. Men in the

past have died for this Liberty which has become a conventional sound. To use it then was to feel deeply: to use it now is to be merely polite. Yet taking the word as we find it now we may discover in it one at least of the forces that have brought our present out of the past.

Here, then, the word is the concrete object which we may study as indicating the past still alive in the present. The life it has may be attenuated or we may think that it is as strong as ever it was. It may be that it seems less living because it is more hidden by later growth. In that sense the study of a great word is not the study of a fossil but of a living organism: but no one can deny that the life of this organism is less splendid than when the word was a signal for revolution: for now the word 'Liberty' provokes hardly any annoyance even in the breast of those who are satisfied.

I mean to indicate, of course, that the starting-point for the study of ideals is the *meaning*, not the sound, of the great word. The mere sound is only the body of the meaning, which is its soul. When I say that we must learn what men meant by using the word Liberty, or Nationalism, or Empire, I intend to refer to the passion which first formed the word. By understanding that we shall understand the force which went to make the present different from what the past was: and then, if the meaning of Liberty or Nationalism is not quite gone, we shall in the end discover what makes the present change into a future which is better. For I am supposing also that if the meaning has not quite gone out of such words they may be still effective as forces in politics. We see them shaping history, less powerfully perhaps, but not less truly than they did long ago.



This sort of history is very different from that of date-and-fact because the meaning of a great word is best understood by *feeling* it, not by remembering its definition, and no one can test feeling by asking questions. But in proportion as this history is impossible for the mere memory, so it is useful in the common life of the world. Memory may be cultivated when one is young, but feeling is more important in mature life : for if a man feels what once moved his forefathers he is the more likely to be filled with the sort of feeling which destroys the evil of the present and creates the good of the future. Thus, once again, the purpose of the history of ideals is not to impress facts upon the mind, but to express the movement of desires so that these desires shall be felt. If the subject-matter is a passion, only passion (however small, so it be genuine) will be the means of appreciating it. If we would discover what moved men and what still moves them, we must ourselves be moved : and by way of avoiding an empty and facile emotion we may assert that 'being moved' in this sense must indicate 'being excited to action'. I do not suppose that the emotion, if we can call it so, which is only a passive admiration, or even a wordy enthusiasm, is any guide ; for those who made the present by using such a word as liberty, were not those who sentimentalized about liberty, but those who acted. So also the word must move one to some action before one can appreciate its real force.

So much for the method in general, now as to the plan to be adopted : we shall have to take the present as our starting-point in order to avoid speaking of dead bones. We shall have to find the

past which is in the present living, not that which is dead and buried. The study of the dead past has its place, of course, since it is by no means quite certain that any atom of it is quite dead. It is the office of some scholars to dig up even the buried past and make the dead bones live, or rather to show that even they have some spark of immortality in them. But our purpose here is simply to take what is living in every one's mouth, the great word, or that which appeals to every one's feeling, the great idea. We shall take this and say of it how it comes to have the value or importance it now has. We shall take the words recognized even by the self-seeking politician as sacred, and say of them how they hold that strange aroma which spreads from them even into the vulgar phrases of a demagogue's rhetoric.

Ever since Darwin wrote it has been granted that one can understand an object very well by discovering its origin.<sup>1</sup> Even the parents of a great man nowadays are given more than a few lines in the great man's biography. In old days the biographer dismissed them with a curt remark, such as that they were 'poor but respectable'; now, however, we seem to understand even the exceptional genius better by hearing of his parentage in detail. So of the great ideal—the great word and its inner meaning: we shall take it as used at present and attempt to express what it meant when it first became a motive force. Our starting-point will be the present, which calls for explana-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle knew that, but Darwin is more popular as an authority nowadays. 'He who considers things in their first growth and origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them.' *Pol.* i. 2. 1.

tion ; and we shall next discover the birth-place of each ideal and follow its history thence.

Thus, looking back, we shall find that Liberty reminds us of Athens, Order of Rome, that the Unity of Mankind was the ideal of the Middle Ages, and the Independence of States that of the Renaissance. But according to our plan it is not ancient Athens that attracts our chief attention : it is that element of Athenian Liberty existing in present life which will be studied. Not ancient Rome, but the Roman Order which lies behind our modern system of government, will be our interest : and so also of Mediaeval Unity and Renaissance Sovereignty. The nouns, not the adjectives, are to be our chief concern : for the adjectives are merely descriptive of the origin of the great Ideal. They are, as it were, the family names of the Ideal ; and the individuals of these families, which we are to study, are at present alive.

The purpose must be remembered also, or we shall be misled into detail. We are to find what Liberty now means by finding what it first meant, but this is only in order to discover what more it may yet mean. And so also of Order, Unity, or Nationalism—they have meant in the past what has made them mean what they do mean in the present. But we do not intend to define the words, we intend to use them ; and if they are still of use their meanings will change. We must therefore have our eye upon what more we can make of Order, Unity, and Nationalism. To express it in metaphor, the age of a tree can be seen by the rings, the marks of years, in the section of its trunk. So each ideal marks a stage in the development of our present civilization ; and it is as we find them now that we

must first consider the marks. But if the tree is still living, these rings themselves change somewhat, for the tree grows in height as well as in bulk. The achievement of the past, formed by the desires of the past, make first the stability of the present and next the force of its future growth.

I suppose it to be admitted that 'politics and history are only different as parts of the same study', and that 'politics are vulgar when they are not liberalized by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to politics'<sup>1</sup>—much as we must all disagree with the implied slight to literature: or again, as Sidgwick says, 'history is past politics and politics present history'.<sup>2</sup> Thus the central interest in what is to follow must be not the record of facts but the statement of problems; and no issue that is stated will be supposed to be altogether obsolete, for we still hardly know what Order and Liberty and Nationalism and Imperialism may be made to mean.

### **The History of Ideals is the History of Civilization.**

It is implied in what has been so far said that although history at large may be so conceived, it is with the history of Western Civilization that I propose to deal.<sup>3</sup> The problem which needs explanation is the political situation in the nations which

<sup>1</sup> Seeley, *Exp. of England*, p. 193. This is, of course, only true in a very vague sense; for obviously a knowledge of past *fact* does not really give any ground for ethical judgement.

<sup>2</sup> *Devel. of European Polity*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> I am inclined to agree that 'Western' is not different from 'Eastern' in fundamental nature, but only in that the principles (universal and human) discovered by the Greeks have been applied in Europe and not, in the past,

belong to the European tradition—that is to say, in Western Europe and its dependencies, and in North and South America. With respect to this I do not propose to speak of the many subjects of disagreement in this political life, for what seems to be no less remarkable are the things which are taken for granted. Free Trade may be opposed to Protection or there may be disagreement as to the utility of State ownership of land; but no one disputes that Liberty or Order is desirable. And further, although I shall have to speak in the later chapters of desires that seem to be by no means generally felt, such desires as are implied in the words ‘Imperialism’ or ‘Socialism’, it seems to me that even in those cases there is an underlying agreement among the majority of thinking men. The actual programmes of parties calling themselves Imperial or Socialistic are indeed controverted; but with those I shall not deal. Rather I propose to speak of the desire underlying and sometimes misrepresented, or at least very crudely expressed, in the programme of the party. Thus many may be understood to be moved by what moves ‘Imperialists’ and yet they may by no means agree to ‘Imperial policy’: and many by no means ‘Socialists’ may desire very much the same sort of situation hoped for in professed Socialism.

But if I restrict my subject-matter to European I do not restrict it to English or even to Anglo-Saxon civilization.<sup>1</sup> For it seems to me an un-

outside. The change in Japan and China shows how Aristotelian and even Platonic conceptions of politics fit ‘Eastern’ facts. Cf. E. R. Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, quoted below.

<sup>1</sup> Buckle is half dissatisfied with the narrowness of his own

warrantable abstraction to divide the ideals of England from those of France or Germany. We may have our local difficulties and our local solutions, but our civilization is genuinely one, whether we live in London, Berlin, Paris, or New York. The conception we have of civilized life is almost the same, and we are certainly moved by the same inheritance. Even if our fathers were different, our teachers were the same. The thought of all European countries, even since the development of different national literatures, has travelled in the same channel. The distinction of languages, indeed, has never obliterated the identity of political terms or even that of the names for ideals. Thus it is as well to regard the larger political issues as 'international'.

We tend to think of politics in a provincial manner. We speak as though the British Constitution were a mysterious creation, the credit for which rests with us because our grandfathers are dead and cannot claim it. We seldom recognize how much we owe to the labour and genius of other races than our own in ages when the inhabitants of these islands were savages : and yet, to any one who knows the evidence, it is clear that we owe much more to Athens of the fifth century before Christ than to the barons of Magna Charta. The average politician thinks that other nations are adopting our admirable Constitution when they are simply applying the discoveries of Athens and Rome :<sup>1</sup> and since the rhetoric is generally more untrammelled the more ignorant the rhetorician,

subject-matter (i. 232). He is fantastically provincial in his idea of English civilization being 'worked out by ourselves'.

<sup>1</sup> Of course I do not mean that there is *no* imitation :

there is much waste of breath over the excellences of our political gifts.

Our history is as provincial as our politics. We can hardly see the great men who are not our immediate relatives, because we look at them through the eyes of our grandfathers and count them just so great as they seemed to our local wiseacres. We know Boethius because Alfred translated him: we know Hildebrand because William, our local Conqueror, was rude to him. Thus all perspective is lost, and the development of our village street seems more interesting than the greater forces which, almost unseen, transformed it. I do not say that all men will find interest in a wider interpretation of history. There are some who cannot even count as real what they 'cannot measure with a two-foot rule': and I should be the last to decry local patriotism. But when local patriotism becomes provincialized history and village politics, it seems pure comedy.

To conceive politics more greatly and to deprovincialize history is to give some sort of new meaning and value to our own lives. For history is not over and in politics we are making it: and even if all human history is only a tragedy of good intentions, the fifth act still remains unwritten. So conceived history will be made something more than the luxury of a scholar. It will be the inspiration of the honest politician: it will be the real basis for criticism of the present and modification of the future. It will be then recognized to be what it really is—the biography of ideals.

for imitation is one of the motive forces in history. Cf. the classical treatment in Tarde and in McDougall.

## CHAPTER II

### ATHENIAN LIBERTY

#### The Athenian Ideal.

HAVING given an account of the expulsion of tyrants from Athens, Herodotus continues: 'It is plain enough, not only from this instance, but from many everywhere, that equality is an excellent thing; since even the Athenians, who while they continued under the rule of tyrants were not a whit more valiant than any of their neighbours, no sooner shook off the yoke than they became decidedly the first of all. This shows that while they were oppressed they allowed themselves to be beaten, because they worked for a master: but so soon as they won their liberty, each man was eager to do the best he could for himself.'<sup>1</sup>

It is a far cry from these words of Herodotus to Mill on 'Liberty', but the ideal implied is the same. Not only is liberty the basis of civilized life, but the progress of civilization depends on a development of personal independence and local autonomy. So that the Athenian ideal is not a thing achieved once for all, which we may accept and rejoice in: it is still an ideal because, although we have much more than even the

<sup>1</sup> Herod. v. 78 *δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἐν μόνον, ἀλλὰ πανταχῆ, ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὡς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον . . .* then follows the explanation of the 'equality'—*ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑωυτῷ προθυμέετο κατεργάζεσθαι.*



Athenians had, there is still more to be attained. Thus liberty remains a word of power, and all parties agree that we must preserve and develop whatever amount of it we have acquired.

Since our purpose is to study, not the details of archaeology, but that element of the past which lives in the present, we must begin by looking about us in this much older world for the reality which was once called Athenian liberty. We shall find it no doubt somewhat transformed, as the grown man is the child transformed, but we shall be able to recognize it none the less. In the current use of the word liberty, both as a valuable possession to be defended and as something to be increased and developed, we shall find the political fact which must be explained by going back to Athens of the fifth century before our era. But we must begin by a summary statement of what the word now means ; and for this purpose it is best to put aside any rhetorical distinctions between true and false liberty. I take it that ' false ' liberty is not liberty at all.

### **Two Sorts of Political Liberty.**

Political liberty has two phases. It involves, first, the independence of the group to which we belong and is opposed to what is popularly known as foreign domination ; and in the second place it implies that each individual is able to do what seems best to him. In the first place it implies the mutual independence of groups, at least, in the decision of political issues. We have this independence in England, France, and Germany ; we regard it as desirable and as something to be maintained and developed.

**Autonomy or Liberty of the Group.**

Liberty of the group is regarded as the basis for all natural development of the country or the race. We take this for granted. For no civilized race will endure foreign domination, however admirable its governors may be ; and even uncivilized races have usually to be persuaded by force of superior arms to accept guidance from those who are eager to govern them for their own good. There is a natural and primitive prejudice against foreign domination which in a civilized race becomes the conscious desire for political independence. The group regards itself as a developing organism which must have free play for its own abilities and untrammelled opportunity for expressing its own characteristics. I am speaking, as it were, from the inside of any group, for not seldom a group which demands liberty for itself denies it to others. The outside view of a group may induce a more powerful group, not only to conquer the smaller, but even to believe that such conquest is good for the smaller. I am not now speaking of that issue. The fact remains that every group regards political independence as good for itself.

**Liberty of the Individual.**

As regards liberty of the individual I need not repeat what Mill has said. We take it for granted that a fully developed human being knows best what is good for him. We all agree that the adult individual should not be treated as a child, and that he should not be governed against his own will even for his own good. Thus, liberty is still opposed to tyranny or caste-government.

It implies : (1) 'absence of physical coercion or confinement,' and (2) 'absence of moral restraint placed on inclination by the fear of painful consequences resulting from the action of other human beings'.<sup>1</sup>

Such, in summary form, is the political liberty which we now regard as valuable. What we have of it we desire to keep, and we still hope to have more of it: that is to say, that liberty is an ideal in the sense I have explained above.

### Athenian Origin of Political Ideals of Liberty.

The source of this conception is to be found in Athens. Other cities before had resisted conquerors, but none had risen to a clear idea of what they were doing. Other cities had contrived to exist by allowing independence to the individual citizen, but none took a pride in it or developed it into so elaborate a system. Liberty of this sort is clearly another name for democracy,<sup>2</sup> and we know how little that word was held in honour at the end of the Athenian greatness. Yet in the days of her decadence Pausanias, the average man surveying the ruins of a greater past, remarks that 'no people yet has flourished under democracy except only Athens. They certainly flourished, for they had much intelligence.'<sup>3</sup> Long ago, therefore, it was held that the liberty to which Athens attained was an exceptional state, which it was difficult to reach or to maintain.

We must, therefore, discover as far as possible

<sup>1</sup> Sidgwick, *Elements*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Thus in Aristotle's *Politics* 'liberty' is the basis of democracy as 'wealth' is of oligarchy (iii. 8. 7). The same is implied in many other passages (iv. 8. 7; v. 1. 3, &c.).

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, iv. 35. 5.

the characteristic features of this liberty, since, although other nations had attained independence before and many have attained it since, Athenian liberty was of quite a unique kind. In great part the evidence for it is to be found in trite passages of Aeschylus, Thucydides, or Isocrates, and I shall not attempt to bring forward any new evidence in this regard; but the historians who have interpreted Athenian political life have often failed to set out clearly what seems to divide that life from almost all others. On this peculiar feature, then, I shall rely for the main interest in the present argument, and I shall repeat only in summary form what has already many times been said as to the local autonomy and the individual independence in Athens. These usual features of political liberty are to be found there; but far more important is the fact that Athenian liberty was productive. It was a freedom of the mind from the trivial cares of food and clothing, a turning of many if not of most Athenians towards art and science, and it had a result which has not yet been surpassed even among those more wealthy or powerful nations which have prided themselves on their liberty. That liberty of this kind should be called political may be unusual; but it is justified by a non-economic idea of the nature of politics. I turn, however, first to the features of Athenian liberty that are ordinarily acknowledged.

#### **Athenian Autonomy.**

As against foreign domination what Athens stood for may be judged, first, from the position that Herodotus assigns to her. His history is

largely concerned with the struggle of Hellas against Eastern despotism; and in that struggle he is forced by facts to acknowledge that Athens was pre-eminent. He recognizes that to say so at the date of his writing would seem audacious, for Athens had already many foes among the peoples whose freedom she had originally secured. Yet he says, 'If a man should say that Athens was the saviour of Hellas, he would not exceed the truth: for they, next to the gods, repulsed the invader'.<sup>1</sup> Thus also the 'games of Liberty' (*Eleutheria*) were instituted at Plataea to commemorate the Liberty of Greece on the suggestion of the Athenian statesman Aristides.<sup>2</sup> And Aristotle, teaching in the Lyceum, held that 'Hellenes do not like to call themselves slaves, but confine the term to barbarians', so that freedom became to the Greeks the most essential characteristic of their race.<sup>3</sup>

To her own citizens Athens was pre-eminent as the city without a master. Thus Aeschylus, in *The Persians*, makes the Chorus astonish Atossa by saying that the Athenians 'call no man their master',<sup>4</sup> and indeed the whole of the play is one song of triumph over the repulse of foreign despotism. The feeling of the time was one of general rejoicing at a victory the full meaning of which no Athenian could have realized; and yet the city was conscious of being almost identified with Liberty.

Thus also after the Peloponnesian War, which

<sup>1</sup> Herod. vii. 139 'Ἀθηναίους σωτήρας τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21; cf. Paus. ix. 12. 6: 'They still (A. D. 170) celebrate the games of freedom every fourth year.'

<sup>3</sup> Arist. *Pol.* i. 6. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Aesch. *Persae*, 244.

rent the Greek world, the conception of Athens as the bulwark of Greece against foreign domination remained. To this conception Demosthenes could refer, and to the ancient enthusiasm he could look for at least a transient resistance to Macedon.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, even before the Macedonian kingdom had become a real danger to Greek independence, Isocrates had sought to re-establish Athens in the minds of his contemporaries as the guardian and champion of liberty. His 'Panegyric' was written about the year 380 B. C., some twenty years after Athens had been humbled by Sparta, and in it he recites the qualities of his city. (Not only, he says, did she secure bare life, but she achieved what makes life worth living.) 'After aiding in the accomplishment of the most pressing duties, Athens did not neglect the rest, but deemed it the first step only in a career of beneficence to find food for those in want, a step which is incumbent on a people which aims at good government. And thinking that life which is limited to mere subsistence is not enough to make men desire to live, she devoted such close attention to the other interests of men that of all the benefits which men enjoy, not derived from the gods, but which we owe to our fellow men, none have arisen without the help of Athens, and most of them have been brought about by her agency.'<sup>2</sup>

#### Liberty of the Individual at Athens.

As for the freedom of the individual with respect to his fellows in the same group, Athens had more difficulty in showing how the State could exist

<sup>1</sup> The evidence is, of course, in the *Philippics*.

<sup>2</sup> Isoc. *Pan.* 38.

on such a basis than in replacing by her democratic system the oligarchy or the tyranny. We must remember that the Athenians had to experiment in a form of government which had hardly been attempted before, and that it is because of their experiment, fatal as it was to themselves, that modern nations have been able to erect a more permanent administration than theirs upon what seems the unstable basis of individual liberty. It is the necessity of any originality in politics that an original-minded people should experiment on themselves; it may turn out to give results beneficial even to them; but even if their originality is fatal to their permanent happiness, others may owe them an incalculable debt. Such is the case with Athens.

The first principle of individual liberty was supposed to be the right of each to mind his own business. Thus the supervision of a caste or an individual was abhorrent to the Athenian mind. Tyranny or oligarchy involved spies; and the more intelligent or well-intentioned the tyranny, the more universal and annoying was the watch kept over the individual citizen. But the only possibility, it was found, for preserving the right of each to mind his own business was in claiming the right of all to mind the public business. For even if we are governed for our own good, the rational man prefers to risk evil if he can be certain that whatever he suffers is his own fault.

(A beneficent tyranny is not to be compared even with an unsuccessful government that is in our own hands.) We prefer the risk of suffering evil at our own hands to the continual receipt of benefit at the hands of others, for 'to have

received from one, to whom we think ourselves equal, greater benefits than there is hope to requite, disposeth to counterfeit love; but really secret hatred. For benefits oblige, and obligation is thralldom; and unrequitable obligation perpetual thralldom, which is to one's equal hateful.'<sup>1</sup> And this is true if tyranny or oligarchy is successful and beneficent. But in fact neither was ever found to be both competent and unselfish. No one has ever been much concerned about the abstract right which may be supposed to be violated by tyranny or oligarchy: it was because in fact these forms of government were found to lead to positive discomfort that they were opposed. They were destroyed, not because 'man must be free', or for any such vague interest, but because they were selfish and incompetent methods of government.

Athenian Liberty was, however, by no means a loosening of the social bonds: for no civilization has ever allowed the individual less power of standing aloof. Liberty involved both the obligation of each to mind the public business and the absolute supremacy of state over individual interests. Freedom was never thought to destroy all obedience of the individual, or the superintendence of some other power over the individual. Only one kind of obedience is repudiated: that is the obedience to one man (tyranny) or to a group of men (oligarchy). Obedience to the *Laws* is an essential element in Athenian Liberty, and, with the usual concreteness or definiteness of the Greek imagination, the *Laws* are continually spoken of as though they were a sort of Super-person. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, i. 2.



Socrates is addressed by the Laws as a son and a pupil,<sup>1</sup> and in nearly all the speeches of Demosthenes the Laws are continually brought into court.

Undoubtedly the Athenian understood that such reverence for the Laws was an obedience of the lower interests within him to the superior reason in him. 'The diminution of liberty caused by fear of legal penalties may be more than balanced by the simultaneous diminution of private coercion. It may be fairly said that the end of government (and of law) is to promote liberty, so far as governmental coercion prevents worse coercion by private individuals.'<sup>2</sup> These words are in full accord with the spirit of Athenian liberty; and it is in this sense that Plato says that a man is enslaved if he follow his vices, and is only free when he is absolutely bound by reason.<sup>3</sup> So also Aristotle has it: 'Men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution; for it is their salvation.'<sup>4</sup>

#### Liberty of the Mind at Athens.

But the Liberty of the Athenians was not merely opposed to foreign oppression and the interference of one citizen with another. It involved a certain more subtle liberty which we may call a liberty for non-material interests. To be free of trivial cares, of the mere need for food and shelter, has been possible in many cities; but few cities have contrived

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plato, *Crito*, p. 51 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Sidgwick, *Elements*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Rep.* 577 D and E. Thus we speak of being enslaved by vice, but not of being enslaved by virtue. ἡ τυραννουμένη ἄρα ψυχὴ ἡμιστὰ ποιήσει ἂ ἂν βουλευθῆ.

<sup>4</sup> *Arist. Pol.* v. 9. 15.

to use such freedom. The peculiar quality of Athenian Liberty is that it was productive.<sup>1</sup>

As Matthew Arnold pointed out long ago, it is of little importance to have liberty if we do not know what to do with it.<sup>2</sup> That every man should be free to go his own way is no gain to any one if no one knows which way to go. Thus, it is quite clear that liberty is a means and not an end. The trouble generally begins when the individual has freedom; his struggle for freedom is comparatively simple. And many minds which are competent to understand the evil of compulsion are not competent to use liberty. For to attain liberty requires goodwill, but to use it one needs intelligence; and good intentions are considerably more common than knowledge.

We must notice, then, that the liberty of Athens resulted: (1) in a general interest in art and science; and (2) in actual productions. The interest in such subjects is not to be neglected when we are considering the productions of genius; for the majority make the intellectual atmosphere, although the few only are able to show results. One does not like to make unkind comparisons, but was the interest of England after Trafalgar and Waterloo in the direction of art or science? It seems it was more concerned with the comforts of the home and the size of individual incomes. Perhaps, however, the contrast is unfair, for, I admit, the issues are more

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Barker, *Pol. Thought of Plato and Arist.*, p. 11, &c. The State was a 'moral' (aesthetic and intellectual) association. The purpose of the State was not different from the highest purpose of the individual, hence no contrast of rights.

<sup>2</sup> *Culture and Anarchy*, ch. ii, 'Doing as one likes'.

complex than such a comparison would imply. And yet we must not suppose that military success always results in intelligent interests among a people, or worthy productions of genius.

It is, therefore, of immense importance that Athenian Liberty was productive; and the Athenians themselves knew that this was its chief quality. Thus the speech of Pericles represents, in a sublimated form, but quite truly in the main, the accepted grounds for the pride of the Athenian in his city. 'We support art,' he says, 'but with a certain restraint, and we support science without becoming unmanly.'<sup>1</sup> That was written many years before our present advanced civilization; but we still barbarously test the greatness of nations by the size of their armaments. Athens was to her citizens something more than a military power, and the best among them at least could see how much more had been won than the mere freedom from foreign domination and internal oppression. Indeed, the history of Athens is more concerned with artists, poets, and philosophers than has been the history of any other city; and that in spite of the very short period in which she had real political liberty. Within that short period nearly all the Athenian interest was turned in the direction of art and science. At Salamis the Athenians secured their final victory against foreign domination; and it is interesting to connect with that battle the names of the three great dramatists who made Athenian Liberty productive. Aeschylus of Eleusis, thirty-five years old when he fought at Marathon, was probably on the ship of his

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. ii. 42.

brother Aminias who led the fleet against the Persians.<sup>1</sup> Out of what he saw and felt he made the great Epic drama *The Persians*. Sophocles, of Colonus, was chosen for his personal beauty to lead the chorus of public thanksgiving for the victory. Euripides was born in Salamis itself, in the year and, some said, on the very day of the great battle. The closeness of the connection between the three great dramatists and the crowning victory may be a mere coincidence; but it is an indication of the sort of men who had free play for their genius in free Athens. Other cities have won such victories over foreign invaders, but none have used their victory so well. And this is not simply rhetorical praise by a person living after the evils of Athens have disappeared. I do not pretend that the years which followed Salamis were a golden age; but I say that, in spite of many evils, Athens had won something of the value of which her own citizens were conscious.

Socrates is prosecuted and condemned by his fellows, and yet he makes the Laws of Athens say to him, 'You had seventy years in which you might have gone away, if you had been dissatisfied. But you preferred neither Lacedaemon nor Crete, though you were fond of saying that they are well governed, nor any other state, either of the Hellenes or the Barbarians. You went away from Athens less than the lame and the blind and the crippled. Clearly you, more than other Athenians, were satisfied with the city.'<sup>2</sup> He prefers to die in Athens rather than live an exile elsewhere; with the voice of Athens in his ears

<sup>1</sup> Herod. viii. 84. Aeschylus refers to it in *Persae*, 411.

<sup>2</sup> *Crito*, p. 52.

he cannot escape from her enchanting presence even with death to startle him.<sup>1</sup> Such was Athens to the most uncompromising of all her citizens: and to him the life that was not reasoned was not worthy to be lived by man.

Not only was Athenian liberty a continual interest and effort in the direction of art and thought, but no other people has ever produced in so short a time such great achievements in architecture, sculpture, drama, and philosophy. This was attained, not by a favoured few, but by a large proportion of the inhabitants. 'This is why the spectacle of ancient Athens has such profound interest for a rational man, that it is the spectacle of the culture of a people. It is not an aristocracy leavening with its own high spirit the multitude which it wields, but leaving it the unformed multitude still; it is not a democracy, acute and energetic, but tasteless, narrow-minded and ignoble; it is the lower and middle classes in the highest development of their humanity that these classes have yet revealed. It was the many who relished those arts, who were not satisfied with less than those monuments. In the conversations recorded by Plato, or even by the matter-of-fact Xenophon, which for the free yet refined discussion of ideas have set the tone of the whole cultivated world, shopkeepers and tradesmen of Athens mingle as speakers. For any one but a pedant, this is why a handful of Athenians of two thousand years ago are more interesting than the millions of most nations our contemporaries.'<sup>2</sup> 'So far', wrote Isocrates two

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54; cf. *Apol.*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Democracy*.

thousand years ago, 'has Athens left behind her the rest of mankind in thought and expression that her pupils have become the teachers of the world, and she has made the name of Hellas distinctive no longer of a race, but of intellect, and the title of Hellene a badge of education rather than of common descent.'<sup>1</sup> I need not count the many results which Athens has left us in architecture, sculpture, drama, philosophy, and political theory. Indeed, a book on ideals in politics must naturally begin with the work done in Athens by Plato and Aristotle.

#### The Athenian Philosophers on Liberty.

Such a guiding ideal must be found reflected in the great political philosophy of Athens. But although Plato and Aristotle belong to their time as much as Rousseau to his, their interests are more universal, and therefore their rendering of the ideal is combined with the expression of many different principles of political science. We must therefore confine our attention to the single conception of liberty, and avoid the discussion of the whole political philosophy of Plato or of Aristotle. Athens was under the eyes of these two, and each in his own way reacted to the popularly received view of what was valuable in political life.<sup>2</sup> I take them now as coming after, not as shaping, the ideal.

Plato was hardly likely to reflect the Athenian ideal of liberty, since he was impressed chiefly by the abuse of individualism in the democracy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Iso. *Pan.*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Barker, loc. cit., p. 13. Of course, Sparta by contrast, but Athens they really knew.      <sup>3</sup> Barker, loc. cit., p. 117.

He desires to subordinate the individual to an organic whole, the State, and to detach the citizen from allegiance to any other organization. But he is, nevertheless, much concerned to show that according to his scheme the citizen enjoys 'true' liberty; and indeed, from one point of view, the purpose of Plato in the Republic is not so much to secure Order as to secure that liberty by which every citizen may perform the function for which he is best fitted. (Liberty is no longer, then, the bare ability to do as one likes, such as the popular Athenian view implied.) It is now the doing of what one can do best. Thus 'it is right for a man whom nature intended for a shoemaker to confine himself to shoemaking, and so on';<sup>1</sup> and again, 'every individual ought to have some one occupation in the State, which should be that to which his natural capacity is best adapted'.<sup>2</sup> To limit yourself by your special ability is not, says Plato, bondage, but liberty of function; as opposed to the democratic man's assertion 'that all appetites are alike and ought to be equally respected'.<sup>3</sup>

The liberty of the Platonic ideal State, then, is not Athenian Liberty in so far as this was undirected or inconsistently maintained by popular opinion; but (it would not be a paradox to say that only in Athens could the conception have arisen of 'freedom to exercise function'). In one sense, therefore, it is Athenian Liberty which is reflected in Plato's mind; but the tangled and noisome jungle of fact is in that clear water reflected as an intricate and perfect design. Sparta may have seemed to him better ordered; but he could not avoid the Athenian tendency

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.* 443 B.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 433 A.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 561 A.

to diversification. His intention was military arrangement to secure civic individuality, an impossible combination. But the purpose always kept him Athenian in spite of the Spartan means he suggested.

Aristotle, on the other hand, being less moved by the evils which Plato observed, in the fate of his Master and in the incompetence of unspecialized government, is more able to see the advantage of even that crude liberty which was attained in Athens. He is more critical of Spartan order and is clear that a State is not an army precisely in that a State has the greatest diversification of individual functions.

Liberty in Aristotle is a recorded fact rather than a pure ideal. It is opposed to slavery.<sup>1</sup> It means to the ordinary man 'doing as one likes'; but that is wrong.<sup>2</sup> And we must notice that Aristotle does not put a philosophic view in contrast with this popular view, but rather shows that the popular view does not in fact render the actual conception of what liberty is as judged from actions—even popular actions. That is, he says, liberty is what you do, not what you say you do; but you do not do as you like: you obey the constitution. 'Many practices which *appear* to be democratical are really the ruin of democracies.'<sup>3</sup> The liberty which keeps the State going is in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 354. I do not see why the author always speaks as though 'to the modern mind' liberty must mean 'non-interference by the State'. That is the 'Individualist' mind only and it is not peculiarly modern. Socialism is more modern and much more widespread outside of academic circles. But here is an example of how political theory is different from political idealism.

<sup>2</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1310 a.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 1309 b.



obedience to the laws. But this is obviously that Athenian Liberty so much praised by rhetoricians. And next the peculiar quality of such a liberty is in the proportional equality of every citizen as against every other: and this, too, takes a prominent place in Aristotle's conception of the State. 'When men are equal they are contented.'<sup>1</sup> That is to say, preponderant power of one or a small clique is a political evil and the ideal which supplies the felt want is equality. But this is simply a statement at the end of its history of that Athenian Liberty which Herodotus praised in its beginning.

#### Critical Estimate of Athenian Liberty.

But there has never been a golden age. History is not a mere rhapsody on the good old times, and men have never in any age achieved all that was implied even in the ideal they accepted and the end for which they worked. Always there has been much evil along with the good.

The Athenian Liberty which reached its fullest development in the fifth century before our era was preserved in its finest flower for only about fifty years. Athens at her best was full of slaves.<sup>2</sup> There was no political freedom for women.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1306 b.

<sup>2</sup> But it is proved that the great works of art were not the result of slave labour; cf. Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 393. It is calculated (p. 170) that about 35,000 inhabitants had complete freedom and managed the State, and that there were about 100,000 slaves and 250,000 free men in Attica, counting the whole population as between 425,000 and 310,000 (*ibid.*, p. 173). As for treatment of slaves, which was better in Athens than in some modern countries, cf. p. 378 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> But this was the rule in the world then, and Athens was

The distress of disease and poverty was not less evident than it is among us. The continual danger of war and the deficiency of intellect or honesty among politicians made Athens no splendid city of dreams, but a sober enough reality, not very unlike that of which we are now aware. The attainment of group independence did not make foreign politics any more noble or idealistic in Athens; and the independence of individuals within the city was often a mere excuse for unbridled egoism and savage jealousy. Athenian civilization at its best was very close to barbarism.

Liberty itself was obstructed. The right of all to mind the public business was made a cover for the interference of each man with his neighbour. We hear of innumerable sycophants and public informers; and Socrates himself suffered death, not from a hostile oligarchy, but from a democracy which was suspicious of any man who seemed exceptional.

And again, as Plato saw, 'the souls of the citizens are rendered so sensitive as to be indignant and impatient at the smallest symptom of slavery. For surely you are aware that they end by making light of the laws themselves, whether statute or customary, in order that, as they say, they may not have the shadow of a master.' Then follows the Nietzschean gospel of the liberty of the Superman, defined as any one who is able to make his own taste his only law, and 'thus excessive freedom is unlikely to pass into anything but excessive

better, if anything, than other cities. A few had freedom, and at least the freedom of women was freely discussed. Cf. Plato's *Rep.* v, and the jokes on 'Votes for Women' in Aristophanes.

slavery, and democracy lays the foundation of despotism'.<sup>1</sup> All which, exaggerated as it is by the aristocratic Plato, is based upon the historical fact that the constitutional limits to individual liberty were never realized in Athens. 'Man should not think it liberty', says Aristotle, 'to refuse to submit to the constitution, for it is their salvation,'<sup>2</sup> but they evidently did so think it in many instances.

Further, the liberty of all led directly to the cult of incompetence.<sup>3</sup> The 'democratic man' of Plato 'maintains that all appetites are alike and ought to be equally respected';<sup>4</sup> as the advocate of individual liberty tends either to deny the distinction of quality among individuals, or, worse still, to suppose that those qualities are more valuable which are appreciated by the greatest number of men. Where all are equally free to give their opinion force in directing the policy of their State, no one is willing to admit that one man's opinion is more valuable than another's; and since the greater number are usually incompetent to judge complex issues, the level of opinion acted upon is generally low. This is all the more dangerous when the liberty of individuals leads them to choose a master. The man chosen by the incompetent is always he who can best be understood; and the higher qualities are less intelligible. Such, in brief, was the argument of Thucydides and of Plato in looking on at the choice of demagogues like Cleon. Aristophanes, too, with his keen perception of political

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Rep.* viii. 563.

<sup>2</sup> Arist. *Pol.*, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Émile Faguet's *Culte de l'Incompétence.*

<sup>4</sup> *Rep.* viii. 561.

issues, makes the choice of leaders the worst result of Athenian Liberty.

Finally and fatally, Athens would not allow to other groups, over which she had power, the liberty she had found admirable for herself. She was accused, not unjustly, by her allies and her enemies of being a tyrant city. And in the fifth book of Thucydides there is written the eternal condemnation of a city which can refuse autonomy to her dependants when she has prided herself on attaining it for herself. The fall of Athens, in 404 B.C., was directly due, not to the liberty she had attained, but to the attempts she made to limit her ideal to herself. There may be no moral in history; yet one more than half agrees with the Thucydidean conception of a Nemesis overtaking all who refuse to others what they believe most necessary for themselves. Athens won independence and used it; and then built upon her achievement an insolent claim to Empire and a vulgar ambition for wealth.

#### Conclusion:

When, however, the worst is said against Athens as it was in reality, it still remains necessary to understand the ideal which was the motive force in all that was accomplished. That ideal we have inherited; and it will be seen later how it is developed in the programmes of modern Individualists or Socialists. For we still think that each man should have free development and that all should concern themselves with the business of the State. Thus Athens, even though she failed, even though she became tyrannical and in the end submissive, has left us as much in her

political ideal as she has in her works of art. It has been observed that the Athenians were never better off than when the Romans had conquered them; and indeed the Romans themselves, in conquering Athens, left her a liberty which they denied to any other city of their dominions.<sup>1</sup> Athens thus overcame her conquerors by her ideal; but it was not Athenian Liberty which she then had. She had only the liberty of a slave to be interested in everything but his own condition; such liberty as might be allowed to the working-man to pursue art and science so long as he will not trouble about wages. Thus Athens was no longer a city, but only a university town of dilettantes, connoisseurs, and phrase-makers; for without Athenian Liberty no great civilization can exist.

I have said that my subject is restricted to Western Civilization; but since for this purpose I have begun the history of political development with a reference to Athens, it may be as well to say that perhaps the subject is really one which concerns all human civilization and not merely that of Europe. I am more than inclined to suspect that the principles first embodied consciously in the law and government of Athens and Rome are human and not provincial. 'No

<sup>1</sup> *Paus.* vii. 17. 2: 'In a later age, when the Roman Empire devolved on Nero, he took Greece . . . and set it free. . . . But the Greeks could not profit by the boon. For when Nero had been succeeded by Vespasian, they fell out among themselves, and Vespasian commanded that they should again pay tribute and submit to a Governor, the Emperor remarking that Greece had forgotten what it was to be free.'

The text of Nero's speech above referred to has been found (see *Bulletin de Corr. hellénique*, 12, 1888). It is referred to in Frazer's *Introd. to Pausanias*.

antithesis is more frequent in the popular mouth to-day than that between the East and the West, between the European spirit and the Oriental. We are familiar with the superiority, the material supremacy, of European civilization. When, however, we analyse this difference of the European, when we state what exactly the qualities are in which the Western presents such a contrast to the Oriental, they turn out to be just those which distinguished the ancient Hellene from the Oriental of his day. On the moral side the citizen of the modern European state, like the citizen of the old Greek city, is conscious of a share in the government, is distinguished from the Oriental by a higher political morality (higher, for all its lapses), a more manly self-reliance, and a greater power of initiative. On the intellectual side it is the critical spirit which lies at the basis of his political sense, of his conquests in the sphere of science, of his sober and mighty Literature, of his body of well-tested ideas, of his power of consequent thought. And whence did the modern European derive these qualities? The moral part of them springs in large measure from the same source as in the case of the Greeks—political freedom; the intellectual part of them is a direct legacy from the Greeks. *What we call the Western Spirit in our own day is really Hellenism re-incarnate.*<sup>1</sup> Such are the words of an historian who has described the first effects of 'Western' civilization upon the 'East'. And the political freedom to which he refers, though faintly present in many Hellenic cities, had no more splendid expression than in Athens.

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, i. 16. The italics are in the original.

## CHAPTER III

### ROMAN ORDER

IF Law and Order are connected in our minds it is because of Rome. She first made it possible for the multitude of different tribes who were our ancestors to form the present European civilization. A city at first no greater than Athens, with disadvantages of position for trade and no great genius for art, she discovered for herself the value of settled law and government, and, in the course of almost accidental rivalry, proved to Western Europe the excellence of what she had discovered.

As for the facts of contemporary life, we take it for granted that Order is as essential to civilization as Liberty.<sup>1</sup> Without any reference to history the political thinker is forced to admit that Liberty without Order is futile ; that we can only keep out of each other's way by agreeing each to keep on one side or the other. And it is only when we begin to think of it as a problem that there appears to be any limitation of Liberty in the establishment of Order, or any violation of Order in the exercise of Liberty. The average man pays lip-service to both.

#### **Modern Ideal of Order.**

Here, however, it is necessary to state at least the general character of that Order which we all are agreed to praise. It implies first that the different

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sidgwick, *Elem. Pol.*, p. 598: 'The political character of a society is lost or impaired when it falls into disorder and anarchy.'

groups of men which we call states shall have some settled relation one to the other. That is to say, for example, the county of Kent shall not make special arrangements with France irrespective of the other counties of the English State. The groups must be at least comparatively permanent ; and within each larger group the subordinate or constituent groups shall also have settled relations one to another. Thus, as Liberty is the principle of change, so Order is the principle of permanence ; and civilized life demands both. Real growth involves at once a continuous readjustment of the growing organism to the environment (liberty) and a ' sameness ' in what is so readjusted. And so a political group has no opportunity for developing its own character unless it remains stable in relation to other groups.

In the relation of individual to individual the same permanence seems to be essential. That is the basis of Law. We cannot live even in comfort, much less with civilized interests, unless, as we say, ' we know where we are ' ; so that we may almost suppose that it is more essential for Law to be certain than for it to be just. The pliability of a beneficent but arbitrary ruler is not so valuable for civilization as the fixity of Law, which is unfeeling, but is common for all concerned.

And again, the caste-system is of course obsolete, but there is a sense in which social orders are of value to a civilized state. It is a gain to have certain fixed relations between those who perform one function and those who perform another, for even within the single state group there are innumerable instances of other groupings, according to common interests or special economic inter-



dependence. We take it for granted, therefore, that it is good for a state-group to be so ordered that its component parts shall not be simply detached individuals, but groups of individuals with common interests. Such is the ideal of Law and Order as we find it in our own day. It is in great part an inheritance from Rome.

### **The First Embodiment in Rome.**

But in order to understand how Rome has, once for all, established the political ideal of Order it will be necessary first to summarize the course of Roman history, and next to show how the Roman Spirit was interpreted by those who observed its development. And with respect to the growth of the Roman Empire it will not be necessary to recite a succession of facts and dates ; for what we are studying is the embodiment of an ideal, and therefore many centuries may be treated as parts of essentially the same movement.

In this case the want from which the ideal takes its rise is the discomfort caused by disorder and instability. The warring tribes and the complexity of divergent custom impressed men unfavourably ; and, on the other hand, they perceived the beginnings of a life more worth living under the system of alliances and the legal uniformity established by Rome. This, more even than the successful wars or the great men of the city, gave to her history a consistent purpose ; but necessarily the ideal was not so obvious as it seems to us now, and it was not so consciously valued as liberty was in Athens.

By way of guarding against the too vague generalities of a philosophy of history, we may note,

also, that although order is the complement of liberty in the basic structure of civilization, we cannot suppose that there is any known cause why the ideal in Athens was the internal development of a small district through the conception of liberty, while Rome seems to have extended her life outwards through the conception of order. We cannot speak as though the Romans knew of the failure of liberty under Athens, or were using the experience of past civilization in their embodiment of order. It was not mere chance which led to the Roman feeling that disorder and instability were the chief evils of life ; but I think we cannot suppose that any ' dialectic of history ' is involved or that the ' logic of history ' made it in any sense ' necessary '. All such phrases are misleading, because the progress of the race cannot be understood either by the Bergsonian conception of an absolutely open future or by the Hegelian conception of a necessary development of the same kind as that observed in the life of an individual. I do not propose to establish the existence of a new law ; I confess I do not know what such a law may be. But as the evidence stands no suggestion for a general law of the development of civilization is adequate, and the conception that it is due to mere chance is philosophically futile, since it is absurd to suppose that because we do not at present know we cannot ever know what is the general rule governing racial history as we know the rules of nature or the human individual. With such a proviso we may proceed to examine the embodiment of the second great ideal of civilized life in the history of Rome.

### The Unification of Italy.

There was, first, the establishment of a hegemony in the Latin league. In place of a confusion of separate tribes, Rome established a settled relation of alliance between her kindred and united hostility to foreigners. And these foreigners were conceived, not, as in Greece, by reference to their lack of intelligence or at least intelligibility, but with respect to their political opposition, this political opposition being primitively based upon military rivalry. Such is the distinction between the *barbaros* of Greece and the *hostis* of Rome.

Part of the same movement we may see in the gradual adoption by Rome of suzerainty over the whole of Italy. Where Rome came, there settled order took the place of continuous and internecine discord. And the external symbols or material seals of Roman Order were the roads and the colonies. From Rome the roads led out over each new district subdued, and gave trade a permanent course and government a ready means of reaching across natural obstacles. For in place of wild land separating the settlements of different tribes, communication along roads bound men together; and the Roman armies could move more rapidly than any opponents who might have to reckon with the untracked spaces where Rome had not yet come.<sup>1</sup> Thus the great Via Appia was built<sup>2</sup> in 312 B. C. to keep the country in order between Rome and Capua; the Via Flaminia (in 220 B. C.)

<sup>1</sup> In the Middle Ages 'all roads led to Rome'; but that was only because nearly a thousand years before Rome had made all roads to the world lead out from her.

<sup>2</sup> Livy ix. 29.

to secure the route to the north ; the Via Aemilia (in about 190 B. C.) across Northern Italy, followed by the Via Aemilia Scauri (in 109 B. C.).

Indeed, on any map of ancient Italy, the most striking feature is the ramification of roads all leading from Rome itself. And as the Roman Empire grew so it marked its progress by the extension of roads. Even in far off Northern Britain the roads kept men in touch with the centre of civilization and made it possible to maintain order. And when Rome drew back from her Empire, in the fifth century of our era, the roads began to be broken up, until at last they remained, in the new civilization of the Middle Ages of the North, one of the few tangible records of more orderly times. Until the seventeenth century, indeed, most of Europe still depended for communication on the neglected Roman roads.

With the roads we must count the colonies, which were to Cicero 'propugnacula imperii'.<sup>1</sup> Such foundations were essentially different from the haphazard results of privately managed emigration. They were established by the State<sup>2</sup> to keep order<sup>3</sup> or to resist invasion.<sup>4</sup> Roman citizens who thus went out were considered as an army, and an assignment was made to them of land, the ancient inhabitants of the district being allowed a portion for themselves. These Roman colonists retained their full rights as citizens of the city of Rome ; but there were other colonies, called Latin, of which the inhabitants had only some of the political rights of Rome. The details, however,

<sup>1</sup> *Leg. Agr.* ii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Livy* xxxvii. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Livy* iv. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* x. 21 ; xxvii. 46

are for my present purpose unimportant if it is sufficiently clear that the deliberate foundation of colonies led to a conscious unification of the whole of Western Europe. The official language was one, law was the same for many distant countries, and the political life of each colony was a reproduction, more or less complete, of that in Rome itself.

But roads and colonies would not have produced Roman Order without Roman Law. It is symbolic of the ideal of Rome that so large a place should be given in her early history to the controversies concerning the Twelve Tables;<sup>1</sup> and it was Rome among all nations which first definitely tried to reduce the chaotic system of tribal customs to the *ius gentium*.<sup>2</sup> Law for the Romans themselves was the very backbone of civilized life; but more strangely still, in that early world of confusion, the Romans conceived a law for others. The 'Praetor peregrinus' and the formulation of general principles of right irrespective of race, language, and land, are signs of what Roman Order meant to the world at large. In place of arbitrary decisions Rome put certainty of principles, and in place of divergent local customs, universality.

Now Rome in all this did not pretend to give her allies and dependents a position equal to her own.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Completed in 449 B. C. These refer to the adjustment of disputes between the social orders; and they are the only *code* in Roman history until the time of Justinian.

<sup>2</sup> I need not discuss the distinction between 'the law of Nature' (*ius naturale*) and the established custom of non-Roman peoples, which is usually called the *ius gentium*.

<sup>3</sup> The *ius gentium* was by no means 'higher' than Roman civil law until a philosophical theory of human nature made it into the *ius naturae*. Maine (*Ancient*

She respected local prejudices ; but the centre of all local interests was Rome. She established order by dividing localities from each other and attaching each directly to herself.<sup>1</sup> Thus the movement of Rome to the natural boundaries of Italy was literally a replacing of disorder, or at least difference and the continual tendency to disorder, by one system of law and government.

### The Organization of the Empire.

The second movement in Roman History begins with the first expeditions outside the boundaries of Italy. And the order which had been found valuable to the Italian tribes was soon accepted by the whole of Western Europe, parts of Asia, and Africa. The Empire only consolidated what the Republic had done ; nor must we lay too much stress on the fact that it was the sword that won and the sword that kept the dominions of Rome. The order that followed gave the Roman army its most effective strength, as it was the order of Rome which had first inspired its movement. For we must remember that the Romans were not a nation of soldiers as we count soldiering to-day. To them always military service was a burden, and the legionary of Rome was at first himself a colonist,<sup>2</sup> who brought with him not only Roman prowess but Roman Order.

*Law*, ch. iii) says that the *ius gentium* was simply due to the refusal to admit foreigners to Roman privilege, but that the Romans should have made order out of a chaos of divergent customs is what is most striking. The later views of Pollock do not interfere with the thesis.

<sup>1</sup> According to the trite quotation—'Divide et impera'.

<sup>2</sup> The *Colonus* was primarily a tiller of the soil.

The value of this order is to be seen, not only in the movement of Rome outwards, but also in the movement of foreigners into the city. Throughout the history of the city her fortunes were 'affected by the presence of foreigners', and we can see clearly enough that it was order which was the attraction. All the contests between inhabitants of Rome were really 'conflicts between a stubborn nationality and an alien population'. 'The instability of society in ancient Italy gave men considerable inducement to locate themselves in the territory of any community strong enough to protect itself and them from external attack.'<sup>1</sup> With this we must reckon some commercial advantage which Rome must have had; but chiefly we must count the establishment of a consistent and efficacious Law as the greatest attraction. Thus, both by going out to make orderly and by reducing to order those who came to her, Rome established a new political ideal.

#### Effects of the Imperial Sway of Rome.

For the benefits accruing to the provinces from the *pax Romana* there is much evidence. The land was divided for administrative purposes; regular taxation<sup>2</sup> took the place of the predatory expeditions of barbarism: there were local centres for the administration of justice at which local customs would be respected, and yet the general

<sup>1</sup> Maine, *Ancient Law*, ch. iii; the words quoted above are from the same place.

<sup>2</sup> For the disadvantages of the Roman system of farming the taxes, see below, p. 65, and Cic. *in Verr.* The whole subject, so far as the facts go, will be found discussed in W. Arnold, *Studies in Roman Imperialism*, and in Bury's *Later Roman Empire*.

principles of law as understood at Rome would be valid for all. This would be generally true of all provinces, although after Augustus the administration varied in provinces which needed military occupation and were under the Emperor himself as compared with those provinces still administered by the Senate.

Nowhere is there a clearer statement of the transformation worked by Roman Order than in the *Agricola* of Tacitus. There it is said 'as men who are scattered and uncivilized and prompt to fight are made more used to quiet and inaction by pleasure, Agricola induced individuals and helped communities to build temples, squares, and houses, praising the energetic and punishing sluggards. The rivalry for distinction took the place of mere compulsion. The children of the upper classes were educated, and he valued the British genius more highly than the Gaulish plodding, inasmuch as they had at first rejected the Roman tongue, but now they actually aimed at rhetorical proficiency. So our dress of rank was adopted, the toga became common.' Tacitus the puritan then shows himself in the disapproval of the luxury which must always accompany civilization; but even in his hard words we may find a record of the good done by Roman Order: 'There was a gradual yielding to the attractions of vice,' he says, 'porches and baths and elegant banquets. And this in their ignorance they called civilization—but it was only one part of their enslavement.'<sup>1</sup> So also in the *Histories*<sup>2</sup> the Romans are said to enslave the conquered by introducing pleasures. But we can see plainly enough the facts upon which the moral

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Agric.*, ch. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist.* iv. 64.



judgement of Tacitus was based, and, allowing for the vicious luxury of the Rome of his day—greatly exaggerated by satirists and controversialists—we can understand the immense benefit to the savage inhabitants of Britain, for example, of a settled life and the latest resources of civilization which the Romans brought with them.

Not least of the results of Roman Order we must count the first real feeling of brotherhood among all the nations which had ever come under her rule. It is not of course Rome, but Greek philosophy, which gave the Stoics their cosmopolitanism ; but such an attitude as theirs would have remained an empty and perhaps occasional aspiration of philosophy but for the fact that Rome had really made so many different races feel their common interests. Thus we must count as due in part to Rome the phrase of Seneca, ' homo homini res sacra ', and that other of M. Aurelius Antoninus : ' The poet says, Dear city of Cecrops ; and wilt not thou say, Dear city of Zeus ? ' It must also be remembered that Rome, in ruling civilized Greece as well as barbaric Gaul, spread the results of Greek thought and developed Greek thought itself by turning it to new issues. And Roman Order kept back the destruction of the Greek world in resisting the tendency of every Greek city to war against its neighbour.

Little need be said to show the Roman ideal of order with respect to the relation of economic groups within the State. Not only did Rome extend her law to different national groups, but she was continually adjusting the political rights of distinct social classes. The whole of early Roman History is coloured by the rivalry and final

adjustment of rights between the Upper Classes and the People. Indeed, the word Order itself reminds one that the upper classes were in good Roman called the 'Ordines'. Ordo seems to be used of any economic group with the same interests,<sup>1</sup> and the word order itself is peculiarly Roman and remains in Europe as a memorial of what Rome achieved.

### Expression of Roman Ideal in Literature.

It is difficult to quote authorities for the Roman conception of the Roman ideal, because Roman poetry and political philosophy are so much coloured by Greek thought; and besides, it is one of the peculiar characteristics of the movement which made the Roman Empire that it was unconscious. Athens, by contrast, had her eyes open in working for liberty and in refusing it to others. She did good and evil with equal foresight; although, of course, it cannot be said of any people that they know what is involved in the first steps they take. But Rome was peculiarly without plan. She marched in this direction and in that, and in a few centuries found herself mistress of the whole world known to her.

As to the part she conceived herself to play in that world the trite words of Virgil are evidence:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.<sup>2</sup>

And Horace has but expressed a contemporary political fact in his splendid prayer that the Sun might see nothing greater than Rome in all his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cic. *Verr.* ii. 6 'Ordo aratorum, sive pecuariorum, sive mercatorum'.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* vi. 851.

journeys, for Rome was indeed the civilized world.<sup>1</sup>

Cicero, in rhetorical phrases, but in the main truly, sets out the foundations of Roman power, saying that 'the way was laid open from all cities to Rome and from Rome to the outer world; the result was that the nearer the stranger was bound to us the greater his share of political and other advantages'.<sup>2</sup> He contrasts the Roman with the Greek treatment of foreigners and is quite conscious that Rome not only won civilization for herself but conferred it on others in the enforcement of Law and Order.

But more clearly still than from political rhetoricians we may catch the Roman spirit in observing the Roman heroes. One can always tell the character of a man by discovering whom he admires, and the ideal of a people is generally embodied in its heroes. But among Roman heroes are to be found no philosophers, no artists, no poets. The list is of generals and administrators. It includes Publius Decius Mus, Regulus, the Brutus of Tarquin fame and the friend of Caesar. Of all these we may say that the leading characteristic is their devotion to what was conceived as the good of the State. They were all supposed to have acted as they did and to have died to keep Rome what it desired to be. And whether the stories of them are historically true or not, they give us a very

<sup>1</sup> *Carm. Saec.* 9 :

Alme sol, curru nitido diem qui  
promis et celas aliusque et idem  
nasceris, possis nihil urbe Roma  
visere maius.

<sup>2</sup> *Pro Balbo*, ch. xii. Cf. ch. xiii 'Illud . . . nostrum fundavit imperium'.

clear insight into the Roman spirit of devotion to Rome. Thus the list of heroes given in Horace <sup>1</sup> or in Juvenal <sup>2</sup> is a clear indication of the Roman conception of what was worthy of imitation, and the complaint against contemporary decadence indicates the same standard.<sup>3</sup>

The trite recitation of these events and views must be justified by the necessity for establishing in concrete form the ideal of order. And just as we saw the peculiar quality of Athenian Liberty to be the productive use made of it, so now we may find a quality in Roman Order which separates it from the order established by such Empires as the Assyrian. This quality is to be seen in the fact that order under Rome was the embodiment of a principle of which the subject races were made to feel the value. The Roman world learnt to keep itself in order; whereas all former Empires seem by contrast to have impressed order from above upon peoples who were never made to understand their interest in the order established. It is the difference between an action done with a consciousness of its value and one forced upon the unwilling; or it may be the difference between a principle embodied and a chance practice.

Too much cannot be made of this quality in the Roman Empire, since it is this which enabled the ideal to survive the downfall of Rome. It has been said that no people over whom Rome had ruled lost entirely the conception of civilized life. Even in far Britain the ability for local government developed by the Roman conception of order meant that the so-called subjects of Rome felt that they had something to lose in the disappearance of

*Od.* i. 12. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.* xi. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Od.* iii. 6. 1.

the Roman system. The provincial and municipal administration distinguished the *pax Romana* from military imperialism; and the fact that all the soldiers of Rome were on the frontiers, that the Empire itself was not garrisoned—a fact which contributed to the sudden success of barbaric invasion—was also an important sign of the idea of self-government implied in Roman Order.

### Criticism of Roman Order.

But order may be paid for too dearly if it is at the expense of liberty. It may be that true liberty is consonant with true order; but how are we to tell the true from the false? Obviously in giving order to Europe Rome had taken away all local vitality. And when the blood was taken from the parts, which had not any power of self-development, the body itself, or the very heart of the whole, decayed. It was because Rome never achieved her own ideal that she perished; for order cannot imply the limitation of the natural development of what is set in order. If it were so, life would not be orderly but only death; an order which is inflexible is tyranny—or in the words of a keen Roman critic 'we make a desert and we call it peace'.<sup>1</sup>

The provinces became the sources of supply to a city which gave almost nothing in return, for the farming of the taxes led to all kinds of corruption and the Roman administrators generally depended upon filling their pockets during their term of office. Thus order became tyranny, and in the name of

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Agr.* 30.

settled civilization all natural growth was checked, since as liberty tends to degenerate into licence so order tends to be corrupted into the unnatural fixity of the *status quo*. Permanence did indeed become a sort of obsession to the Roman mind, as we may see by comparing the eagerness for new things among the Athenians with the continual praise of Roman moralists for the good old times; indeed the word for revolution in Rome is simply 'something new';<sup>1</sup> and Tacitus hints at an experience of the rigid and inflexible conceptions which have crushed the life of morality, in Rome and in other cities also, in the splendid phrase 'Virtues unrecognized were counted as new vices'.<sup>2</sup> But the order which sacrifices originality, and therefore growth, destroys itself.

And next Rome could not maintain the administrative order she had established. Her own sons rose against her: 'the secret of empire' was out when it was found that 'an Emperor could be made outside of Rome'.<sup>3</sup> And with few exceptions the years which followed the death of Tiberius were filled with internecine and civil contests among the powerful for private gain. What is most astonishing is the length of time during which the provinces continued to flourish<sup>4</sup> while Rome itself was

<sup>1</sup> 'Res novae': so a man of no position is a 'novus homo'. There is a Roman horror of novelty which still haunts the City.

<sup>2</sup> 'Virtutes ignotae nova vitia.' Tac. *Ann.* ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Nearly three hundred years. Surely it is an astonishing fact that Gibbon took fourteen volumes to describe what he called a 'Decline and Fall'. He covers more time in that work than would have sufficed most nations for their most flourishing state.

disorderly and rent by private selfishness. The foundations must indeed have been well laid for the building to survive such treatment as it suffered for so many years before it fell in ruins. But gradually the provinces learnt to disregard their common interest; the barbarians, made orderly and therefore powerful by Rome herself, began to despise the strength and to covet the wealth of their former mistress: and the Roman World was scattered into the dust of tribes out of which it had been made.

Such are the facts which show how the ideal half consciously followed by Rome was corroded; and how in the failure to attain her ideal Rome herself disappeared as a political power. As liberty became licence in Athens, so order became tyranny in the Roman Empire; and despite the benefits of the 'pax Romana' we must recognize that it involved evils which were too great for men to endure long. The natural forces of local discontent and personal rivalry might have destroyed the Roman Empire just as effectually without any barbarian invasions, and indeed we may assert that in a sense the barbarians only made obvious what was already an accomplished fact—that Roman Order had disappeared.

It will be seen that I reject entirely the old platitudes concerning the moral corruption of the Roman Empire. It is impossible to admit that the barbarians who sacked Rome so often during the fifth century of our era were either more moral or of purer race than the civilized inhabitants of the Empire. All the trivial moralizing about the victory of a barbaric purer morality is due to early Christian Fathers who were intellectually incom-

petent to understand the situation. Unfortunately for moral ready-reckoners, the destruction of the Roman Empire by the barbarians was in fact an emergence of brute force in Europe, from which it has taken us nearly two thousand years to recover.

It is true that Roman Order had devitalized local growth, and that the provinces had no obvious interest in the continuation of the system; but by contrast with what was to follow, even the tyranny of an official caste would have been preferable. When the Empire was no longer more than a memory, Europe was delivered over to confusion, and all the political ideals of the past were forgotten, only gradually to be recovered when the spirit of Rome began to overcome and to educate her destroyers. For Rome remained a name of much power when the actual city was a ruin and its inhabitants an uncivilized rabble. The gorgeous ghost which inherited the Roman name in Constantinople could still overawe the barbarian when Rome itself was in ruins, for Athanaric is reported to have said that the Emperor appeared to him to be a God upon earth.<sup>1</sup> As Freeman admirably puts it: 'It is in the days of the decline of the Roman power—those days which were in truth the days of its greatest conquests—that we see how truly great, how truly abiding, was the power of Rome.' So great indeed was it that the barbarians who conquered her 'deemed it their highest glory to deck themselves in some shreds of her purple'.<sup>2</sup> And again, 'the history of Rome is the history of

<sup>1</sup> Jornandes, *de Get. Orig.* ch. 28; Migne, vol. lxxix 'Deus terrenus est Imperator'.

<sup>2</sup> *Comp. Politics*, p. 329.



the European world. It is in Rome that all the states of the earlier European world lose themselves ; it is out of Rome that all the states of the later European world take their being'.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman words Caesar and Imperium still guide much modern political thought, and the city of Rome itself is still much more to the Western world than a mere capital of the Italian kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

## CHAPTER IV

### COSMOPOLITAN EQUALITY

#### **The Cosmopolitan Ideal.**

A COMMON humanity is now usually believed to override all distinctions of race or of social status. Man, although divided from his fellow man, is at least more divided from the beast; and at least civilized men of every race are by a common sentiment supposed to be political equals. But this was not always so. Not long ago philosophers found it possible to maintain, what common prejudice asserted, that some men were naturally slaves and others masters—that there was a greater distinction between a master and a slave than between a slave and a beast, or even a tool. And not much more distant is the time when reasonable citizens believed, what the unthinking still often take for granted, that one's own race was 'humanity' and all others simply 'the rest'.

The recognition in practice, however, of a common humanity is still an ideal: for it is hardly yet possible to act upon it, either, for example, in the solving of the negro problem in the United States, where a racial distinction is identical with one of social status, or in the management of European policy with regard to China. The majority, even of statesmen, still continue to think that the practical recognition of a common humanity would involve some injury to the real distinctions of race or of

social rank. They cannot yet grasp that to recognize likeness in one element supports rather than destroys distinction in another ; one is more likely to see the real distinction between Chinaman and Englishman or between master and workman when the real likeness between them is understood than when it is disregarded. For the likeness being disregarded, the difference is exaggerated and thus falsified. And yet in practice our statesmen cling with pathetic faith to the immense value of the distinction between races and ranks, and refuse to subordinate either to cosmopolitan equality. In theory, however, and in sentiment, all men are recognized to have something in common ; and if it be agreed that this common element must be maintained and developed then we have the modern ideal of a common humanity. It is faint enough as a motive force in politics ; but even in this faint embodiment it represents the slow growth from an earlier time. For the bare theory or sentiment had to be established in the face of a contrary practice and a philosophy which supported that practice ; and although we have not yet the ideal in practice, we have it in theory. We must therefore first discover what is the present meaning of the idea that men of all races and of all ranks are somehow equal. It works vaguely and intermittently in modern politics.

#### **Modern Form of the Ideal.**

As at present active it involves first that no nation shall regard itself as superior *by nature* to any other. I do not mean that we should deny the fact that some races are not developed. The conception opposed to that of cosmopolitan humanity is

that of natural and inevitable *inability* to develop. Thus it is not opposed to this ideal to say that a race is not developed ; but it is opposed to the ideal to say or to act as though any race were not able to be developed. We are moved by this ideal if we act as though any and every race *may* enter into the tradition of civilized life ; since this implies that no natural and ineradicable element in the lowest group will prevent its descendants at some time from being civilized.

In the second place the ideal involves at present the repudiation of at least the theory of slavery.<sup>1</sup> The practice of slavery need not concern us at the moment ; for we are all agreed that even if there are slaves there should be none. The ideal, then, involves that there is no human being who is not more like any other human being than he is like a beast or a tool. Thus we are all agreed that a common humanity exists in spite of, or above or beneath, the distinctions of social rank. Race and rank, then, are the obstacles against which the ideal is a protest, not as though it would destroy them, but because we must correct the exaggerated value they are given in political life. Our ideal in this matter is naturally due in part to the work of the Revolution,<sup>2</sup> but there are certain elements<sup>3</sup> in it

<sup>1</sup> It is indeed difficult in reading Seneca's letters and then Mr. Rowntree's *Poverty* to find any fundamental distinction (other than that of language) between the slave and the labourer. But the old theory is dead. Cf. Barker, *Pol. Theory of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 372 : 'Modern practice . . . while recognizing the right of every man to life and liberty, does not make it real.' Yet Mr. Barker (loc. cit., note) is afraid of seeming to imply a right to work.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chapter vii.

<sup>3</sup> As, for example, its connection with religion.

which belong to a still earlier stage, when race and rank were stronger even than they were in the eighteenth century. For the explanation of these elements in the present ideal one must go back to the period which saw the decay of the Greek-Roman civilization.

This ideal<sup>1</sup> was established in face of two great evils, (a) the Greek-Roman exclusiveness implied in such words as barbarian, and (b) the universal system of slavery. It arose out of the perception of these evils and out of the hints of good involved in the cosmopolitan power of Rome and the Christian-Stoic conception of the brotherhood of man. But the ideal, though double-faced, was one. Men were at the same time and by the same causes led to destroy the exclusiveness of primitive races and to correct the extremities of distress arising from slavery. They felt the irksomeness of racial distinction at the same time as the discomfort of slavery, since slavery itself was recognized to have come out of primitive exclusiveness.<sup>2</sup>

For purposes of argument, however, it is better to take the two elements separately. First, then, let us consider racial exclusiveness.

<sup>1</sup> What follows is continually dependent on Carlyle, *Med. Pol. Theory*, vol. i, and Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christl. Kirchen und Gruppen*.

<sup>2</sup> Thus all thinkers of the period look upon slavery as a substitute for slaughtering enemies. It was based upon tribal war, which again was simply due to race exclusiveness. Cf. the *Digest*: 'Ius autem gentium omni humano generi commune est; nam, usu exigente, et humanis necessitatibus, gentes humanae quaedam sibi constituerunt. Bella enim orta sunt, et captivitates secutae, et servitutes, quae sunt iuri naturali contrariae, iure enim naturali omnes homines ab initio liberi nascebantur' (*Inst.* i. 2. 2).

'Et libertas quidem (ex qua etiam liberi vocantur) est

### The Ideal opposed to Racial Exclusiveness.

The tendency to this is universal. Indeed, it is even more obvious in the claim of the Jews to be 'the chosen people', and to be in some sense religiously or divinely isolated from all other races, than it was in the Greek pride of culture or the Roman pride in 'virtus'. Nearly all the pre-Greek empires seem also to have been based upon the exclusive quality of a conquering race; and this exclusiveness, consecrated by religious enthusiasm, was one of the chief obstacles with which the great Universal Religions have had to contend. The claim to a special revelation for a chosen race has been made or implied by every race in the primitive stages of its development. But with this issue we are not immediately concerned, since (1) the effect of religious exclusiveness is less when men reach the political stage of development, and (2) the changes in European political ideals in this matter are nearly all due to the conflict with Greek-Roman exclusiveness.

The fact that Christianity arose out of an opposition to Jewish exclusiveness and that it greatly modified the political life of the first four centuries of our era will be noticed later. It is necessary first to notice the evil out of which the Stoic and

naturalis facultas eius quod cuique facere libet, nisi si quid aut vi aut iure prohibetur. Servitus autem est constitutio iuris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno *contra naturam* subiicitur. Servi autem ex eo appellati sunt, quod imperatores captivos vendere iubent, ac per hoc servare nec occidere solent' (*Inst.* i. 3. 1 to 3).

'In potestate itaque dominorum sunt servi' (*Inst.* i. 8. 1).

legal cosmopolitanism of the later Roman Empire grew.

Athenian Liberty was always exclusive. In its practice this has been admitted;<sup>1</sup> but even in theory the Athenian made a very clear distinction between the Hellene and the non-Hellene.<sup>2</sup> Barbarians were by nature incapable of the culture which Hellenes had attained and race characteristics obscured the fundamental nature of man.

### Rome's Cosmopolitan Tendencies.

This theory was acted upon by politicians at the very moment when Alexander's armies were unconsciously proving that no such vital distinction could be made.<sup>3</sup> It was soon abundantly obvious that the most diverse races were capable of assimilating the culture of Athens, and therefore 'barbarian' could no longer be used to refer to distinction of race. Romans and others were admitted to the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the native Athenian found himself in a world where Alexandria could prove all races equal in the capacity for philosophy or poetry. That the culture lost in depth by being so extended made no difference to the essential fact that what had once been a distinction of the Hellene was now common to men of every known race. Rome carried to its conclusion this tendency to cosmopolitanism.

In the Roman world also the old racial practice

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Arist. *Pol.* i. 2. 4, quoting Eurip. *Iph. in Aul.* 1400; and again Arist. *Pol.* i. 6. 7. Also 'Barbarians are more servile than Hellenes', *ibid.* iii. 14. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Carlyle, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 7 et seq.

and theory, and further practice bolstered up by the theory, are to be found prevalent even while the effect of Roman Order was to eradicate any such vital differences between the provinces and Rome. Thus the *civis Romanus* originally claimed a racial and natural superiority to 'outsiders'; but when the claim to citizenship was most powerful under the cosmopolitan Empire, the racial exclusiveness implied in the claim had already disappeared. In the events of the time we may watch the old racial exclusiveness giving place to the new cosmopolitanism in the admission of foreign genius transforming Roman literature, in the growing sense of common citizenship and common power in distant provinces, and at last in the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of A. D. 212.<sup>1</sup> We must add to this the increase of humanitarian legislation which developed into the later Roman jurisprudence, in all of which the same feeling for a common humanity is obvious.

### Stoic and Christian Cosmopolitanism.

This ideal is reflected in the literature of Stoicism, and it may be noted in the prevalence of the word *homo* as compared to the word *civis* which had earlier been more prominent.<sup>2</sup> 'Man in contact

<sup>1</sup> Caracalla conferred by this the citizenship upon all the subjects of the Roman Empire.

<sup>2</sup> As the individual comes into prominence as opposed to the State, so cosmopolitanism develops. 'Daraus ergibt sich auch hier ein prinzipieller Individualismus der religiös-ethischen Persönlichkeitsidee und ebenso sein unumgängliches Korrelat, ein ebenso prinzipieller Universalismus der alle Menschen zur gleichen Gotteserkenntnis berufen weiss und sie in gemeinsamer Hingabe an das göttliche Naturgesetz ethisch verbindet.' Troeltsch, p. 53.



with man in society is proof of the common law of Mankind.'<sup>1</sup> 'We are members of one great body.' 'Yet it shames not men to rejoice in each other's blood, to wage war and to hand on to our children more wars, while even the dumb beasts keep peace in their own species. . . . Man, the sacred thing to man, is slain in holiday sport.'<sup>2</sup> 'This is Man's duty, to help men.'<sup>3</sup> Such phrases, little as they meant to the men of the time, were signs at least of some vague hope which in spite of centuries of disappointment may still survive. There was at any rate the conception of a fundamental interest, due to likeness, between men of every race.

The cosmopolitan ideal in early Christian literature has been so often described<sup>4</sup> that it is not necessary to deal with it here. The Gospel brotherhood of Man and the great Pauline phrase 'Neither Jew nor Greek' are not only protests against the exclusiveness of the Jews but against every racial difference which might be made an obstacle to the recognition of a common humanity. And this ethical-religious conception obviously affected the arrangement of political relations between men of different races.

The magnificent theory of God's State and God's Politics in St. Augustine contains in religious language an indication of the same cosmopolitan tendency. 'That heavenly State,' he says, 'while in pilgrimage on earth, calls its citizens from all races and its pilgrim company is gathered from men of every tongue: for it cares not for diversity in manners, laws or administration, by which peace on earth is acquired or maintained. None of these

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* v. 7 (48).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* *Ep.* xv 3 (95).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* *Dial. de Otio*, iii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, *init.*

are abolished or destroyed, but they are kept and followed. For the diversity of different tribes tends to the single end of earthly peace if it does not hinder the religion which teaches the service of the only true God.<sup>1</sup> And the frequent reference in the Sermons of St. Augustine to the common nature of all men in so far as Man was made in the image of God, shows how completely the exclusiveness of race was breaking down, at least from the point of view of religion. The effect upon political relations with 'foreigners' was natural and inevitable. One could no longer be altogether superior to 'outsiders', when the special relations between the Deity and one's own race were no longer supposed to exist.

As an ideal this conception was always limited by being applied only to a certain group of races and not to humanity at large. By the time that the barbarian invasions were over there was no race in Europe which was racially exclusive, either in theory or practice, in the same way as Greeks and Romans had been. Men of different races might still have the primitive disdain of foreigners, but all were treated as equals who belonged to the European group. Thus the cosmopolitanism of the Middle Ages was made possible in the orders of knighthood, the 'catholic' clergy, and the universalism of scholars. But the cosmopolitanism or equality of race was not extended beyond the European nations. Even the Jews, whose relationship was close enough with European society, were regarded as 'outsiders'. And this limitation of the ideal, now less prominent in religion, still survives in the political contrast between what is called the East and the West.

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, xix. 17.

### The Obsolescence of Slavery.

In the next place the practice and theory of slavery had to be criticized before another stage could be reached in political life. Athenian Liberty and Roman Order both rested upon slavery, and although a few idealists might attempt to understand the State without reference to it, the majority accepted it as inevitable and thinkers saw in it the only possible method of attaining the life of leisure. Hence it was that Aristotle explained slavery as due to some fundamental difference among men, some of whom were by nature slaves.<sup>1</sup> This conception had to be destroyed before the narrow cliques of the Greek-Roman world could be broken up and political life proved possible for every sane adult human being. The theory of Aristotle was destroyed in the interval that separates him from St. Augustine, and, although in practice little enough was done for definitely political progress, the ethical and religious revolution intensified the feeling which was growing that slavery as an institution was a nuisance.

The ideal does not arise because of a theory as to the nature of man, but rather from a perception of definite evils. The evils of slavery, however, were not recognized at that time in precisely the same way as we, looking back, should now recognize them; nor was the gain to be hoped for from an abolition of slavery by any means so clear as we now suppose it to have been. The ideal at the beginning is vague and confused, since the want from which it arises is indefinite. Slaves and

<sup>1</sup> Arist. *Pol.* i. 5 et seq.; 'the slave is a tool,' *ibid.* ch. iv. Cf. E. Barker, *Pol. Theory of Plato and Aristotle*, ix. 2.

owners were alike feeling the inconvenience of the situation ; but neither party had any definite other institution to substitute for slavery ; and in the end the old institution simply decayed because of the invasions, the new society, and the new beliefs. It was not abruptly abolished.

We may, however, in a summary manner attempt to express the real difficulty of the old situation, first from the point of view of the slave, and next from that of the slave-owning classes. And from the slaves' point of view it is difficult to see definitely what the grievances were, since slaves have not, of course, expressed themselves in literature ; and many things which would horrify us were undoubtedly accepted as a necessary part of life by the enslaved. It is very easy for men to submit. Though dissatisfaction has made history, men are easily persuaded to leave things as they are. A cow does not revolt if the field is pleasant ; and by treating men as beasts they are made to acquire that satisfaction which distinguishes a beast from a man.

Excessive cruelty was not usual, but the danger of such cruelty acted as a spur to discontent. Prisons and mines and chains were always before the eyes even of those belonging to kindly masters. Natural affection would be hampered while slaves were used for breeding purposes :<sup>1</sup> blood relationship was disregarded.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Digest are noticed the practices of man-breeding for economic ends of the slave-owner. Plutarch (*Cato M.* ch. 21) says that Cato held that it was personal passion which made slaves most restless, so he only permitted his slaves occasionally to indulge in it.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ad leges serviles cognationes non pertinent.' Paul in the *Dig.* xxxviii. x. 10, par. 5.

Work brought no gain to the worker. Vast numbers would contain at least a few who were on the look-out for a chance to evade a force they could not resist. And added to particular grievances was, no doubt, the indefinite feeling of ability not recognized or superior force of numbers not used. For though many slaves did indeed become beasts or tools, the minds of a few survived. These prevented others from being altogether benumbed and made submissive animals by the accepted institution, as is clear from hints in the *Lawyers* and in *Seneca*. There was continual restlessness which not seldom broke out into open defiance, and the very hopelessness of the situation bred a contempt of death against which not even the most subtle slave-master could contend.

Perhaps even the Stoic praise of suicide was not due to an abstract theory but to the observed frequency of the practice among slaves, who sought often an escape to that 'liberty to which a door may be found in every vein of the body'.<sup>1</sup> 'How many slaves', says *Seneca*, 'has not the anger of their master driven to seek a refuge in death?'<sup>2</sup> There was therefore a feeling of the intolerable evils of the institution which grew with the increase in the number of slaves at the end of the Roman Empire.

From the point of view of the masters slavery was not altogether pleasant. It might make

<sup>1</sup> *Seneca, de Ira*, iii. 15; cf. *Dial.* vi. 20: 'Haec (mors) servitutum invito domino remittit. Haec captivorum catenas levat.' The description of the evils of life which follows is almost a picture of the distresses of slavery. 'Omnis vita servitium est,' he says (*de Tranq. Anim.* x. 4). 'Qui mori didicit, servire dedit' (*Ep.* 26. 10).

<sup>2</sup> *Dial.* v, *de Ira*, iii. 5.

leisure or great wealth possible, but the price paid was heavy. The slave-owning classes lived continually on the watch. Plutarch makes Cato say that he preferred a slave who slept when he was not working;<sup>1</sup> and although in less developed economic situations, such as that of the small family, the slave was a member of the household, the institution of slavery led directly to the dangerous labouring masses of later Rome.

‘We must go on depending on those who weep and hate us,’ says Seneca.<sup>2</sup> That is bad enough, but it might become positively impossible: ‘He is a bad servant who is so reckless as to despise even death.’<sup>3</sup> And not merely the impossibility of governing so reckless an instrument—but also the continual danger from slaves of which we read so often in Seneca, must have made the most convinced Aristotelian or the most inhuman slave-owner uncomfortable.

Politically the evil resulted in a perpetual fear of revolution, which would naturally destroy the value of that very leisure which slavery was supposed to make possible. Any small governing clique which depends upon the labour of a great number of other human beings must live in a state of watchfulness. All would be well if the slaves could in practice be treated as animals or as tools; as they might be regarded in theory. An animal

<sup>1</sup> *Cato Maj.* ch. 21. *πραοτέρους τῶν ἐγρηγορότων.*

<sup>2</sup> The passage in which these words occur I have not been able to find again; but cf. *de Brev. Vitae*, 4, on the boredom of having many dependent on you. And *Ep.* 47 ‘totidem hostes esse quot servos. Non habemus illos hostes, sed facimus.’ *Ep.* 4. 8 ‘Intelliges non pauciores servorum ira cedisisse quam regum’.

<sup>3</sup> *de Ben.* ii. 34.

will not revolt if its food is secured, and a tool will remain as one leaves it when not being used; but the capacity for development of a non-material kind makes it difficult to keep any human being in a given class. The fundamental likeness of all human beings forced itself upon the recognition even of those who persisted in supposing that some men were beasts or tools.<sup>1</sup>

Further, political life became more and more impossible in proportion as the ruler could rely upon freedmen or slaves hoping to be freedmen to act in his behalf. It was, in part, slavery that made the destruction of Senatorial power possible.

Again, the decrease in the number of small proprietors of land or houses and even of small industries was recognized as a political difficulty; for, the social organization is less stable in direct proportion as fewer have any interest in its maintenance. But it was slavery which made possible the growth of the vast estates of Imperial Rome; and the great slave-owners were masters of industry and of agriculture as well as maintainers of large private establishments.<sup>2</sup>

### **Stoic and Christian Views of Slavery:**

In view of these evils the idea began to be suggested that slavery itself was undesirable. The only good which could be pointed to by contrast,

<sup>1</sup> 'Ne tanquam hominibus quidem, sed tanquam iumentis abutimur,' Sen. *Ep.* 47. 5.

<sup>2</sup> I take it as known that slaves were used as 'factory hands' or as 'agricultural labourers' for a source of income to the employer-owner and not as merely family or personal servants. The modern parallel is not only in the domestic establishments (footmen, &c.), but also in the mills of Pittsburg.

to make the basis for an effective political ideal, was independent individual labour; and that, as we know to our cost now, is by no means an unlimited blessing. But we do not find that any genuinely political movement was initiated by those who saw the disadvantages of slavery. The suggestions were more of a religious than of a political nature. They appear as expressions of a sentiment of equality and of kindness to all men, including slaves. The influence of the Stoic cosmopolitanism was forcible in changing the practical attitude at least among the thinking few; and a real amelioration at least of the conditions of domestic slaves was the result.

Then came Christianity with its practice as well as its theory of brotherhood: and thus also slavery was made less irksome to master and slave. It became impossible to act in precisely the traditional way, either as a master or as a slave, and this transformed the actual working of the institution even though not this but other forces were working at its abolition. Thus political changes were occurring although, because the forms remained, the extent of those changes cannot be clearly read in the events of the time. Christianity did not attempt to abolish slavery. Indeed, St. Paul had set the tone in favour of the maintenance of established institutions;<sup>1</sup> and so far as action went the new Christians strove rather to make the best of what was bad, keeping their eyes upon another and a better world.

The reflections of the ideal are stronger in literature than in events, because the changed attitude

<sup>1</sup> Thus he sends back the runaway slave (*Ep. ad Phil.*): cf. the language as to subjection (1 Cor.) and government.



did not result in any great remodelling of the social system. And as examples of the literary cause and literary effect of the new ideal we may take Seneca's *de Beneficiis* and St. Augustine's *de Civitate Dei*, one preceding the other following the great religious change which affected political life.

In Seneca it is maintained continually that slavery does not destroy the natural equality of man.<sup>1</sup> 'He errs who thinks that slavery goes to the heart of man. For the better part of man is unaffected. Bodies are under the power of a master and are counted as his, but the mind is free (*sui iuris*). It is so untrammelled indeed that it cannot be held down even by those prison walls within which it is shut, but may burst out to great deeds and flee to the infinite as a comrade of the divine.

'It is the body then which fortune gives to the master. This he buys and sells. That inner element cannot be enslaved. What comes from that is free; for we cannot command everything, nor can slaves be forced to obey in everything. Commands against the State they will not obey, and to no crime will they lend their hand.'<sup>2</sup> It is a far cry from Aristotle when we read, 'A slave can be just and strong and noble-minded'.<sup>3</sup> 'Can a slave benefit his lord?—Well, a man can help a man.'<sup>4</sup> And examples follow of noble acts done by slaves.

Again, there is the trite passage in the letter to Lucilius, 'They are slaves, it is said—Yes, but men.

<sup>1</sup> The statements in the *de Beneficiis* are all given in Carlyle and well summarized. Therefore I select only a few passages as typical.

<sup>2</sup> *de Ben.* iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 22.

Slaves—but comrades. Slaves—but poor friends. Slaves—Yes, but fellow-slaves. . . . Live kindly with your slave, and as a comrade. Admit him to speech and counsel and common fare. . . . “He is but a slave,”—Yes, but perhaps his mind is free.’<sup>1</sup> Such sentiments, if they had been embodied in a programme for the reform or the abolition of the institution of slavery, would have immensely effected political development; but they remained unembodied.

In the interval between Seneca and St. Augustine<sup>2</sup> the influence of an organized religious system had made more effective the growing sentiment against slavery; although it was combined with a passionate desire not to be revolutionary in politics. In the *de Civitate Dei* it is said<sup>3</sup> that ‘No man is by nature a slave . . . but only a beast is by nature such. Sin, however, was the origin of slavery; which God has established as a punishment.’ Therefore in the management of a household ‘although a distinction must be made in the treatment of children and slaves, yet in the service of God in which eternal good is hoped for, all members of the household must be regarded with an equal love’.<sup>4</sup>

Thus we may find indications enough both in the records of the situation and in the sentiment of

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 47 (Teubner).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Carlyle, i. 114. Where the doctrine of the other Fathers in this matter is also explained.

<sup>3</sup> *de Civ. Dei*, xix. 15. Of natural liberty: slavery, he says, ‘non fit nisi Deo iudicante’: but St. Augustine goes on to say that evil masters may have good slaves, in which case it would seem that the punishment for the original sin falls upon the wrong shoulders. This is, however, probably ‘a mystery’.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xix. 16.

idealists that slavery was discovered to be in some way objectionable. Such a distinction of rank could no longer be supposed to abolish the fundamental likeness between all human beings; and although no political thinker arose to establish the ideal in the definite form of a plan or programme of reform the vague sentiment was strong enough to ameliorate in some way the evils of an institution which it was ineffective to abolish.<sup>1</sup>

### Criticism of the Ideal of Equality.

The criticism of such an ideal is only too easy. It was based upon a political need, but it supplied no political or economic remedy. The changed attitude towards slavery was undoubtedly a gain even for the arrangement of the political relations between men in a civilized society. But a sentiment is not effective for the majority unless it be embodied in an institution. A few may really abolish the evil of slavery by treating their servants as human beings and not as tools or beasts; but to the vast majority an attitude or a sentiment is a transient luxury of momentary emotion having no real effect on their action.<sup>2</sup> And slavery was

<sup>1</sup> The new situation is expressed in the *Digest* (cf. Carlyle, op. cit. i). 'Sed hoc tempore nullis hominibus, qui sub imperio nostro sunt, licet sine causa legibus cognita et supra modum in servos suos saevire' (*Inst.* i. 8. 2).

Antoninus made the murder of one's own slave punishable as if the slave belonged to another, i. e. the punishment was death or deportation. In the case of lesser cruelties the slave was to be sold and his price paid to the master. A slave's earnings, however, were never legally protected.

<sup>2</sup> For example, every one says patriotism is admirable, but the majority are quite incapable of continued and

ameliorated but it still continued in existence with all its dangers even after Christianity was an established force. It died down in fact not because of any political substitute offered by Christian or other thinkers, but simply in the general ruin of the old social system during the Dark Ages. We say first then that the ideal was ineffective because it was embodied in a sentiment and not in a programme.<sup>1</sup> 'Christians', says St. Augustine, 'should not own a slave exactly as they own a horse or money, even though the horse may sell for more than the slave.'<sup>2</sup> But 'slaves must go on submitting even to bad masters', so long as these do not go too far.<sup>3</sup> Thus no real change could be effected in the institution, and the change in sentiment was therefore made less effective.

And again the ideal involved the disregard of the actual social situation. It repudiated rather than reformed the established system. The objectors against slavery did not attempt to show how men might do without the institution in actual life; they said in effect that the conditions of actual life must be simply disregarded by those who were Stoics or Christians.

The Stoic said that according to the law of Nature there was no slavery; but the law of Nature had in fact been succeeded by a convention to which we must submit. And the Christian said that there had been no slavery 'before the Fall of reasoned patriotic action unless an institutional demand, such as service in the army, is made.

<sup>1</sup> So Seneca does not dispute the actual necessity of slavery, although he wishes the *attitude* changed. 'Sibi quisque dat mores: ministeria casus adsignat,' *Ep.* 47. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *de Serm. Dom.* i, c. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxix.

Man', but man had fallen and we must submit to the established conditions. The dread of revolution was hampering idealists. The Stoics had seen the evils of the rapid changes in government under the influence of a brutal egoism or military power without any noble conception to guide it. Anything therefore seemed better than further unsettlement. And Christianity had been accused of anarchical tendencies, which indeed had proved difficult for the first Apostles;<sup>1</sup> it was necessary therefore to avoid the disruption of society which might be attempted in the enthusiasm of a religious revival. Thus both the systems of political idealism were made over-careful.

Both Stoicism and Christianity disapproved of slavery; but both were too careful of the established order, and the real effect of their attitudes was to keep the old institution in existence. For to the Stoic the law of Nature was somewhat aloof from the actual arrangements of society. Stoics might believe and even act as though a slave were a human being; but the established convention had also to be maintained. And the Christian idealist also believed all men equal in the eyes of God and treated slaves as brethren; but he too gave his influence to maintain the established institution, for the laws of the City of God were very far removed from any real contact with the order of the State.

Thus began the greatest hindrance to political development, the divided allegiance, according to which men continue to maintain as citizens what they condemn as human beings. Caesar being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Carlyle, *loc. cit.*, i. 156. Hence the extreme admiration for government from St. Paul to Gregory I.

given one sort of service and God another, the higher your enthusiasm the more you neglected the actual re-arrangement of human relations. The temporal was reduced to dust and ashes by taking from it all the spirit of life, and the spiritual was emptied of all content by being removed from immediate contact with the world.

It must be understood that I am not undervaluing the effect of religious enthusiasm on political life ; but, since politics can be distinguished from religion, one may understand how political change may be lessened by the transference of all enthusiasm to the sphere of religion. The actual effect of such religious enthusiasm upon politics is very much less than a more obviously political enthusiasm would have attained.<sup>1</sup> There was nothing essentially Stoic or Christian in the neglect of political development at the date to which we have been referring ; but Stoicism and Christianity appeared in a world which had exhausted its political inventiveness and even its capacity for political perception. The result was that the political changes were few, so far as the development of the civilized tradition is concerned, and most of the political energy was spent in assimilating northern institutions of a more primitive type or in embodying the old ideals in a new form.

In spite of its deficiencies, however, the ideal lived on, transforming the relations of man to man in the social castes of the Middle Ages and preventing

<sup>1</sup> A contrasted case may be found in modern politics (v. Individualism, &c.), where political enthusiasm is given an almost entirely economic tone. As Religion tends to the neglect of Politics, so Economics tend to confining its scope.

serfdom from developing into a new slavery. It broke into new flower with the rediscovery of politics at the Renaissance ; and it was at work to destroy the inequalities of men at the Revolution. With respect to the other element in the same ideal—the cosmopolitan equality of races, as opposed to equality of political rank—the later history of the tribal groups in mediaeval Europe is largely due to the conception of all civilized races as equal. The exclusiveness of race had been overcome and the movement became possible towards mediaeval unity.

## CHAPTER V

### MEDIAEVAL UNITY

#### Originality of the Mediaeval Ideal.

SUPERFICIALLY very little remains of the ideals of the Middle Ages. If one sought in the statements of the fourteenth century an expression of what was worth working for, little would be found with which we should agree. Idealists then set out magnificent programmes for the political adjustment of the relations between man and man. And most of these programmes are quite unreal to us, since no one to-day would think it desirable to subordinate the rulers of Europe to a German Emperor, even if he called his Empire holy and Roman ; and no one would work for an adjustment of classes within the State such as is implied in Feudalism. But the ideal which lay behind these fantastic programmes is still active in so far as we desire to maintain and develop a comity of European nations. The obsolete programmes, therefore, may be used as a partial and transient embodiment of an ideal. We may give the mediaeval idealists credit for their intentions, for they were hampered in their expression of them by their inheritance.

The ghost of old Rome haunted their minds ; and they took the creature of their dream for the Roman Empire made holy by alliance with the Roman Church. But this creature was really a new spirit wearing the trappings of the old.



What they imagined was a political unity unlike that of the Roman Order in everything but its language, degraded to a universal dialect: and they took the result of their imagination for a mere reproduction of obsolete fact. Less imaginative ages have often called a register of fact by the high name of artistic creation; but the Middle Ages never gave themselves enough credit for the Holy Roman Empire. They should have said it was an absolutely new conception, and they declared instead that it was what had already existed. We must then give them credit for a political ideal which they really created, although they never claimed to be creators of a new motive force in politics.

#### **The Holy Roman Empire.**

The Empire they imagined was the crude embodiment of a conception of European Unity. But to the cursory eye that Empire, never very substantial, is less now than even the shadow of a name. It may seem that the political ideal of the Middle Ages is at its best represented, as its monastic ideal is, by ruins. The beauty and grandeur of abbey and cathedral may be undeniable; but little indeed is left of the conceptions of human life which prevailed among the men who built them. I am not concerned here to say how much has survived of the religious ideals of the Middle Ages; but it is essential to note that the Spirit may inform many shapes, and the ideal may survive a complete transformation of its bodily expression. That is the case certainly with the political ideals of mediaeval thinkers; and my task now is to show what motive force at present exist-

ing in the political sphere is an inheritance from them. I take as my historical phrase the Holy Roman Empire, and I shall attempt to show how much is in existence to-day of that conception which made mediaeval jurists build up the Empire. To do so it will be necessary first to distinguish the ideal from its almost accidental form. The mediaeval thinker would not, of course, agree with what I have to say about his ideal; for in the course of history much meaning has developed out of his half-formed thought, and he would be the last to recognize his own progeny in its new shape. Again, I do not presume to say that the Holy Roman Empire was an accidental form in the sense that the mediaeval thinker could have imagined a unity of nations without any suzerain. The conception of common interests among different peoples and of an organization of world-polity necessarily expressed itself in the Holy Roman Empire, because of events which had preceded. But the actual detail of the conception, the relation of the King of the Romans to the princes of Europe and other such ideas, were due ultimately to the magnificent ideal of unity among all civilized peoples. It is this conception of unity which still survives in our political thought in the distinction we make between European and other nations and in the vague feeling that we have which makes European war seem more terrible than any other. We still take it for granted, although in only an indefinite way, that the peoples of Europe are brothers, and such a conception is not cosmopolitan nor is it anti-national. It is a concept of quite a unique relation which in fact is due to mediaeval history. Underlying all the

obsolete politics of the *de Monarchia* and the *de Regimine Principum*, there is this ideal which still lives. It was first a motive-power in the Middle Ages, even if consciously it did not enter into political action: it has survived the Industrialism of the nineteenth century, and it is still forcible in moulding our conception of the future we desire.

**Modern European Unity.**

Let us take it first as we find it active in modern politics. There is a common feeling among the people of Western Europe that they are, in spite of differences, part of one system by contrast with the races of the East. Mr. Kipling declares that

Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain  
shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment seat.

He is perhaps unaware that such sentiments are a survival of the Middle Ages, when Western Europe regarded itself as civilized humanity and the outer world as only 'the rest'. But he represents a feeling which, even if mediaeval, is none the less based upon observation of undeniable facts. The civilization of all the various nations of Western Europe is really one, and I do not in the least mean to be abusive in using the word mediaeval; for the Middle Ages observed facts and made a record of them in their political conceptions. It would be a very deficient history which refused to recognize any debt to the Middle Ages and confined our political inheritance to what we derive from Greece and Rome.

Again, there is a vague feeling that war among the nations of Europe is more terrible than war of

any one of these against 'savages' or 'the yellow races'. There is more than a tendency to regard European war as almost civil war, whereas other warfare is regarded as only 'civilizing'. Idealists who dream of a homogeneous humanity are much incensed by such distinctions; and we must admit that it is no justification of one evil to say that it is at least not so bad as another. War against savages is not rational simply because it is slightly less irrational than war against our equals. No war is civilizing, even though some wars obstruct civilization less obviously than others.

But the fact remains that the popular feeling is quite justified. European war is more terrible to contemplate than any other because the nations of Europe are in fact more united in sentiment and tradition than any one of them is with non-European nations. Even treaties cannot abolish the past. Japan is alien to us in a sense in which Germany is not. And it is utterly impossible in rational politics to regard one nation as absolutely equivalent to another or to test their relationship merely by Economics.

Suppose that two brothers who have grown up together are in conflict during their later life about some business issue. Even so, they are bound together by their common tradition more closely than either of them is with his business partner. Or again, imagine men who have been educated in the same school. They too may become rivals politically or in business and yet a common tradition would hold them together and keep them distinct from even their partners or members of their party who have not been to the same school. But some of the nations of Western Europe are

brothers in blood and all have been to the same school.

Two points, therefore, are of interest in this matter. First, there is the general feeling of the unity of Western European civilization, and next there is the general desire that such unity should be preserved and developed. This is the ideal which we inherit from the Middle Ages, and it is still effective in politics.<sup>1</sup>

#### Mediaeval Origin of the Ideal.

We must now discuss its meaning and value. But this can only be done by discussing its origin and first development, and then interpreting the language of those who first attempted, although half-consciously, to express it. The facts to which we must refer are those of psychical inheritance rather than of external event; we must find out how the desire for unity in Europe first became forcible, how it then expressed itself in the form of a political programme, and how the inevitable limitations in its expression led men to oppose the ideal.

The downfall of Rome has become a platitude of history; and with the power of Rome, order disappeared in Europe. Even such order as Rome had achieved, inadequate as it was by comparison with the ideal which Rome herself had suggested—even that order was more admirable than the confusion which followed. Each locality preyed as far as it could on the other, and various tribes began moving across the settled lands of

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle (*Med. Pol. Theory*, I. iii, ch. xv, p. 185) seems to doubt whether the value of the conception of unity has not been exaggerated. It is to be understood that I limit the effectiveness of the idea to Europe.

Europe, so that even the most primitive civilization of agriculture became almost impossible. Men lost heart at the sight of the fruits of labour destroyed by the ignorant rapacity of barbarous invaders, and the best possible means of living was in copying these successful savages. Those were the Dark Ages indeed, since almost all that had been won by Greece and Rome seemed to be lost.

The chronicles of the time record invasion and, following upon the destruction of crops, famine and, hard upon famine, plague. Then once again invasion; and so on, year after year, until no man lived without daily fear of death and the greatest expected soon the end of the whole world. Thus in the words of Pope Gregory I: <sup>1</sup> 'Everywhere we see grief: we hear groans on every side. The cities are ruined, garrisons destroyed, and country depopulated, so that the land is made desert. No husbandman in the fields, and almost no inhabitant in the cities, but the small remnant of the human race is still daily and ceaselessly troubled. Some we behold led off into captivity, some maimed, others killed. . . . If we still delight in such a world we must love wounds, not joys. We see what Rome is now, that Rome which once seemed the Queen of the world. Her citizens are few, her enemies always attacking, and her ruins everywhere.' And again: 'The ruins of the world call aloud. The world under many blows falling from its glory shows us how near the other kingdom is which is to follow.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hom. xviii, *super Ezechielem proph.*, Migne, vol. 76, p. 1009.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. iv, *in Ev. I*, Migne, vol. 76, p. 1090: 'Ruinae mundi voces eius sunt. Qui attritus percussionebus

Pope Gregory's work also expresses the natural result of such an observation of evil in the exaggerated value he seems to give to established government.<sup>1</sup> It is natural to suppose that in the general confusion he felt the need of maintaining any shadow of established authority which might remain over from better times : and his own deference to the Eastern Emperor was simply a logical result of what seems to have been his general conviction as to the sacredness of secular authority.

Discord and disunion had taken the place of liberty and order. But out of much wandering and many wars and universal confusion the world of the Middle Ages was born. It was natural that with the half-remembered dream of Roman Order in the waking world of many conflicting interests the mediaeval ideal should be unity. In such a time what seemed most desirable was the realization of common interests among the warring tribes or the invaded peoples. Only upon such common interests, it was felt, could peace and security be established ; and along with the memory of

a gloria sua cecidit quasi iam nobis e proximo regnum aliud quod sequitur ostendit.'

Gregory argues that in the time of the Apostles miracles were necessary to make people feel for ' the other world ', but when ' this world ' was obviously dying no miracles were needed.

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to deny Mr. Carlyle's statement that the attitude was ' due to three causes ', the need of correcting the anarchical tendency in the primitive Church, the relation between Church and Emperor, and the influence of the Old Testament conception of the position of the king (Carlyle, I. iii, ch. xiii, p. 157). I add a fourth cause.

The further passages may be found discussed in Carlyle, loc. cit. They are *Reg. Past.* iii. 4 and *Lib. Mor. in Job*, xxii. 24.

Roman Order went the new Christian gospel of the brotherhood of man, until at last vague aspirations took definite form in an ideal.

### The Ideal in Action.

The form in which men of the early Middle Ages conceived unity was, no doubt, inadequate; but it was the only possible form to minds so situated. In that world of disunion there existed one organization which seemed to rise superior to divisions of place, nationality, and language. By the time that the tradition of Roman Order had completely disappeared, the missionaries of the Roman Church had already reached the farthest bounds of what was afterwards to be Mediaeval Europe. And the Church thus became the source of that aspiration after political unity which was embodied in the Holy Roman Empire.

The officials of the Church were definitely connected by the use of one language and by general agreement as to the nature of the world and the duties of man. Their customs and traditions, even apart from religious ritual, were the same. They were at home with one another long before the different migrating or dissevered nations were able to conceive of any peaceful relation among themselves. By contrast with diversity of local belief and practice, the organized Christianity of the eighth and ninth centuries preached 'One God, one faith, and one baptism'. Unity was, as it were, the charm by which the divided powers of earlier religion were eventually subdued. Thus when at last the settlement following the migrations of the Dark Ages began, there was already a definite con-



nection to be found throughout Western Europe, and that was the Roman Church.

Then came the success of Charles the Great. Since the disappearance of Rome no such far-reaching power over wide domains had been seen. What was more natural than to call the new power by the name of the old, or even to identify the two by supposing the Empire of the ninth century to be only a resurrection from the dead of the Rome long since dismembered? <sup>1</sup>

On Christmas Day, A.D. 800, the Pope Leo crowned Charles the Great King of the Romans. The Holy Roman Empire was thus, as we now say, founded; but to the man of the Middle Ages all that had happened was a renewal, after an unfortunate lapse of centuries, of the rule of Augustus Caesar.<sup>2</sup> Charles himself, the revolutionary beginner of a new civilization, was deluded into believing that he was only a maintainer of an ancient order.<sup>3</sup>

The Roman Church passed on its sacred, its magic, word 'Unity' to the new Empire; and thus the Emperor became, for over five hundred years, the recognized symbol of the unity of all the humanity that counted.<sup>4</sup> Thus Alcuin addressed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Carlyle (*Med. Pol. Theory*, I. iii, ch. i, p. 197) for the completely new atmosphere of the ninth century, even as compared with Gregory the Great.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quem (Carolus) hodie Augustum sacravimus.' Bull of Leo III ap. Jaffé, *Regesta Pontif.*

<sup>3</sup> Thus his seal is inscribed 'Renovatio Romani Imperii'. Bryce, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christl. Kirche*, p. 166, and note, p. 170: 'Das Ideal des wahren Staates ist dann eben nicht mehr an dem Naturrecht gemessen, sondern an der Glaubensgemeinschaft.'

Charles: 'The prayers of all the faithful must follow you that your imperial power be exalted gloriously, that the catholic faith be fixed in all hearts by one accord, in so far as by the gift of the heavenly King all men everywhere may be ruled and guarded by the holy peace and perfect love of unity.'<sup>1</sup>

So also Engelbert, Abbot of Admont, writes: 'There is one only State of the whole Christian people, and therefore necessarily one only chief and king of this State.'<sup>2</sup> It is because of the unity of all civilized humanity that there is one symbol and support of that unity, the Emperor. There was already a beginning of political unity to which the idealist could point as something desirable. Its effects could already be felt by the many to be good before any great political theory of unity arose, for the beginnings of actual unity in the success of the Roman Church were continued and developed in the less complete success of the early Empire.

But in the ninth century the complete theory of unity was not yet established, since the majority seem to have believed in a dual authority of Pope and Emperor each supreme in his own sphere.<sup>3</sup> Probably this was simply a step towards the later ideal of a single head for all Christendom, for it seems that the theory of dual authority is rather an avoidance of the real issue than an elaborate political scheme. A settled society had begun, and

<sup>1</sup> Alcuin's letter, quoted by Bryce (p. 92) from Waitz. I have rendered it freely to give the force of the concluding phrase: 'Omnes ubique regat et custodiat unitas.'

<sup>2</sup> Engelbert, quoted by Bryce, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Carlyle, *Med. Pol. Theory*, I. iv, ch. xxi, p. 253 et seq.

the relations between the warring tribes had been partly arranged by a theoretical subordination to one Emperor in the temporal and one Pope in the spiritual sphere. It was easy to see how much had been gained by such unity; and the eleventh and twelfth centuries had only to make the last step in resolving the dualism into the real unity of which men dreamed.<sup>1</sup> But just this step it was found impossible to make. Political practice and thought having climbed so far from the Dark Ages, stumbled at the very summit of its ambition. The opposing claims of Church and State could not be reconciled.

The history of this long controversy need not be described here, since what is important for my present purpose is that the whole controversy as to which power should be supreme proves conclusively that every one at that time thought that *one* should be supreme. Both Papalists and Imperialists therefore supply evidence that (1) as much unity as had been acquired was specially valued, and (2) the ideal of the time was an increase of such unity. Each party in action as well as in theory wished to preserve the essential qualities of the power it wished to subordinate. The Imperialist by subordinating the Church made the State a Church; the Papalist, subordinating the State, made the Church a State; but each did this for the same purpose, that the world should be a unity. Such is the process that appears in the action of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and is systematized in the thirteenth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, *Med. Pol. Theory*, II. ii, ch. x, p. 199 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II. ii, ch. xi, where the continual change of the Middle Ages is well rendered and the distinction made

The men of the Middle Ages did not observe confusion and then imagine an ideal unity by contrast. That is never the history of an effective ideal : it never is without basis in actual fact ; it is never purely the effect of desire, for its beginnings are always to be found existing along with the undesirable fact to which it is opposed. It is partly the effect of imagination ; but the imagination only carries out what experience has already suggested.

There was in the midst of confusion a certain unity, to develop which was the hope of reformers. First there was the ecclesiastical system. In this one might hold position quite apart from difference of race or even of feudal rank. Thus although the various races in Italy gave the Church most of its Popes, Germany and England gave some. The great bishops of Christendom in the different countries had international power : and even the simple 'clericus', if he happened to travel outside his own district, would be recognized in all Europe as having certain rights.

But in spite of the beginnings of actual unity in the ecclesiastical system, unity was more important still in aspiration than it was in fact. When the Middle Ages were well begun there was still a continual complaint as to prevailing disunion, and a writer at the end of the eleventh century actually hints that the disorder was due to the Papacy itself. This was perhaps prejudice ; and yet it is a sign of the high value put by men of that period on unity. 'Long', he writes, 'have wars and

between the growth preceding and the systems appearing in the thirteenth century. The excellence of these systems has given the Middle Ages a false reputation for stability and changelessness.

seditions troubled the realm of the Roman Empire ; and some say that the supporter of this discord is Gregory the Pope, who is called Hildebrand.'<sup>1</sup> And again: 'It is certainly true that Pope Hildebrand has attempted to destroy the Scriptures and commands of the Lord concerning the unity of the Church.'<sup>2</sup> The treatise from which these words are taken begins by showing that schism is the greatest of all crimes since it is an offence against unity. Quoting St. Augustine the author proceeds: 'Woe to them who hate the unity of the Church and presume to make parties among men ! Would that they might listen to those words : for it is clear that the sin of schism is greater than that of idolatry, since we read in the Old Testament that idolatry was punished by the sword and schism by an opening of the earth.'<sup>3</sup> Thus the unity actually established by the Church was as nothing if compared with the ideal which the Church herself had first suggested, which the memory of Roman Order supported and the Mediaeval Empire inherited.

As the Church is the first period of the Middle Ages, so in a later period Learning also was really international and thus kept Europe together. Irrespective of race, if the student desired to study Law he went to Bologna or Padua, if Medicine to Salerno or Montpellier, if Theology to Oxford or Paris.<sup>4</sup> The same language, the same text-books,

<sup>1</sup> Schardius, *Syntagma Tractatum de Imp. Iurisd., etc.*, publ. 1609. The tractate above quoted is *De Unitate Eccl. conservanda et schismate quod fuit inter Henric. IV et Greg. VII.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> The details may be found in Rashdall's *Universities of the Middle Ages*. There it is shown that the first

and the same methods were recognized all over Europe. The student held the same place in every land, and claimed almost the same privileges; and before beginning the special study which was to fit him for public activity he was put through almost the same course in Arts as all other students.

Such were the facts; and imagination, going beyond them, held up before men an ideal unity of culture which was expressed in the *Licentia docendi* granted by authority to proved scholars and in the use of the word *Studium*. For *Studium* did not only mean the actual system of higher education; it meant a universal power in Europe to be ranked with the Church and the Empire.

We may find another trace of actual unity in the criteria of social rank; for these also were the same in all countries, so that a real unity might be found among knights or princes of widely separate realms. Diplomacy, that interesting survival of mediaeval and Renaissance politics, still preserves some of the ancient criteria. A diplomat can still arrange meetings between potentates on the basis of mediaeval ideas of caste. The extent to which one monarch may bow to another is still known; but we no longer so generally know precisely where a knight of the United Kingdom should sit if he meets a count of the kingdom of Italy. The coming of nationality has obscured the universally accepted castes of the Middle Ages. We accept division as desirable, but in those days the actual unity of social ranks led men to form an ideal

Universities were each a school for special studies; universal in their appeal to different nations rather than in the, rather futile, attempt to teach all subjects.

European polity in which each man should have his place recognized in whatever country he travelled.

**Literary Impression of the Ideal.**

The importance of unity to the mind of the Middle Ages may be still more clearly seen from the rank given to the Emperor by theorists. He is not related to kings as they are related to their vassals. Such a relation was held to be too external; it did not sufficiently indicate the uniqueness of the Emperor's position in the world. As Emperor he is over and above all that system of ranks which may seem to lead up to him. He is to Kings as the Pope is to Bishops: and we know that the Pope stands aloof in the ecclesiastical system of ranks. To say even that he holds the highest rank is to misrepresent the mediaeval conception. The Pope is outside of all ranks. And so also the Emperor stands in an absolutely unique relation both to the source of all power who is God and to the kings of earth. The Emperor is not a feudal sovereign; for he does not even in theory own the land on which men live who are subject to him, whereas the feudal system implies a theory of ownership of land. Thus although the Emperor happens at the same time to be a feudal sovereign over parts of Germany, as Emperor his authority is not feudal and extends in some ill-defined way even over England. Such was the generally current conception of the Emperor as the symbol of that ideal unity of all civilized humanity, which was thought to exist in such a way as to underlie and almost reduce to insignificance national, racial, or local differences.

As evidence for this lofty conception we have

not only the generally accepted political theory but definite literary expressions ; of which the most striking is to be found in the *de Monarchia* of Dante.<sup>1</sup> This, although a personal expression of opinion, is really a statement of an accepted theory at least in its main contention. It is not a Utopia ; it is a political programme : and although the genius of Aristotle shines through the childishness of Mediaevalism, its politics are very far indeed from the Greek. It begins with the statement that there is one common end for all humanity in so far as all are men. One end implies one rule, as we now admit : and then comes the innocent mediaevalism, 'One rule implies one ruler' !<sup>2</sup> Next, the ruler is to the realm of humanity as God is to the Universe.<sup>3</sup> Further, contentions may arise between lords and kings, and there must be an ultimate judge ; and again, what one can do should not be done by many. By what Dante calls inductive reasoning also, the single principle of unity is proved essential, 'for the world was never quiet except under the Monarch Augustus Caesar' ;<sup>4</sup> but now mankind is transformed into 'a beast of many heads'. The third book shows that the Emperor as the source of political unity does not hold his power from the Pope and therefore (chap.

<sup>1</sup> The text may be found in Schardius's *Syntagma* above referred to or in the Works of Dante. I quote from Schardius. <sup>2</sup> Ch. v.

<sup>3</sup> I, ch. vii 'et ipsa ad ipsum universum sive ad eius principem qui Deus est et Monarcha respondet, per unum principium tantum scilicet per unicum principem'.

<sup>4</sup> I, ch. xvi. The mistaken idea as to the nature of the Empire of Augustus is here obvious ; but the mistake is continued by the German historians who interpret Imperialism as a Caesarism enforcing peace by military power.



xvi) he holds it direct from God. The whole work is saturated with the conception of an underlying unity in all the diversity of human character and human interest. Man as man is the basis for politics, and it made little difference to Dante or his contemporaries that man meant only the inhabitants of part of Europe during a few short years.

The other treatise on politics which is expressive of unity is that of Thomas Aquinas, which is known as the *de Regimine Principum* or the *de Rege et Regno*.<sup>1</sup> There it is said that a single power must move all to a goal which is *one* for all; and going further than Dante, Thomas makes the king to his people 'as the soul is to the body'.<sup>2</sup> He is like God in the world. God made it and rules it; and so the king makes the State and ordains its end and the means to that end, which is 'virtuous life'.<sup>3</sup> Thomas writes like an intelligent schoolboy who had read Aristotle, but did not quite understand what politics are. His admiration for unity, however, is all that concerned us here and we may leave uncriticized his fantastic conception of political power. The leading conception of the constitution of civilized society both in the *de Regimine Principum* and in the part of the *Summa*<sup>4</sup> which deals with this issue, is that of

<sup>1</sup> *Opusculum*, xx. (edit. Rom.) vol. xvi. (edit. Paris). In the Paris edit. of 1875 it is in vol. xxvii. From the middle of Book II the work is not by Aquinas.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sicut anima in corpore et sicut deus in mundo,' i, ch. 12.

<sup>3</sup> 'Virtuosa vita est congregationis humanae finis,' ch. 14.

<sup>4</sup> In *S. Theol.*, prima secundae, q. xcvi (de legibus), and q. cv (de ratione iudicialium praeceptorum), art. 1, ad 2, 'dicendum quod regnum est optimum regimen populi': and the division into many kingships is a punishment

unity. This alone gives force to the desire for one ruler, since the mediaeval thinker could not conceive of unity except in what we call a pictorial or plastic form. Men needed then, as it were, to see unity in order to believe in it; but they did believe in it intensely.

#### Modern Form of the Ideal.

Such was the mediaeval ideal of unity, and such the embodiment of it in the world of historical fact: it is not altogether obsolete. I have given at the beginning of this chapter the argument by which European Unity might still be maintained. In the rivalry of nations—an inheritance from the Renaissance—and in the agitation for social reform—an inheritance from the Revolution—modern politics seems to take little account of European Unity; but at certain times the old ideal recurs to the minds of statesmen. Thus a sort of faint shadow of the ideal is to be found in the so-called ‘Concert of Europe’. In actual politics not much force seems to remain in the words, but they express a common sense of duty and a vague aspiration for unity. Enough has been said elsewhere of the futility of the supposed Concert, in which every member seems to be aiming at private advantage; and no statement of policy other than empty expressions of general principles has ever come from its conferences. But it remains an embryonic fact rather than a means of ‘perfection’, *ibid.* ad 3 ‘multitudo regum magis est data in poenam . . . quam ad eorum perfectum’. Cf. *Secunda secundae*, q. I, art. 1, ad 2 ‘regnum inter alias politias est optimum regimen ut dicitur in 8 *Ethic.* c. 10’. All, however, ‘must have a part in the State’. Thomas ‘proves’ that the Mosaic rule was the ideal composite suggested by Aristotle!

in politics and it may yet be developed. Thus the mediaeval ideal of unity would remain, not in the vague cosmopolitanism which desires to find the common interests of all men, but in the development of actual European sympathies. We may still desire to see the nations of Europe at least agreed in the maintenance of what we believe to be civilization; for it is not too much to expect that they should subordinate the immediate private interest of each to the general effort towards liberty and order, and the common end of all may well prove to be the best for each.

Some vague feeling, however, seems to survive, which prevents any real European Unity: and this is not due merely to present jealousy but to the deficiencies of the original ideal. We must therefore turn to criticism of the mediaeval conception.

#### Criticism.

The disunion and rivalry between nations, which marks modern European politics and is even taken for granted as desirable by many writers on politics, is not a purely modern growth. The ideal of the Middle Ages was never attained and in part it was really defective. We must not too readily condemn an age which did not achieve its ideal; because the ideal itself may have had limitations which prevented its attainment, and we are different from our mediaeval forefathers chiefly in being able to stand aside and criticize even accepted conceptions of what is desirable. The idealists of the Middle Ages were peculiar in condemning their contemporaries and never really blaming the ideal itself. Thus Langland in England laments the primitive simplicity and the contemporary luxury

of the world. In his view all would be well if men lived up to their beliefs and professions, a pathetic fallacy which still survives in the rhetoric of preachers. It never dawned on his rather limited intelligence that his conceptions of the ideal life might be mistaken. So also the much greater Dante looked back with regret to the days when humanity lived up to the ideal: he was ignorant, of course, that no such days ever had existed.<sup>1</sup> The implied attitude is clear. If men would but realize the ideal of Church and Empire all would be well; and even Dante never dreamt that such ideals might have necessary deficiencies. Petrarch too when he wishes to reform Europe does not suggest any *new* ideal: he only points to the old plan which even the good intentions of the best Popes and Emperors had never made workable. And so, long after the faintest possibility of European political unity had disappeared, mediaeval-minded thinkers called men to accept the old ideal.<sup>2</sup>

If anything divides our attitude completely from that of the Middle Ages it is this.<sup>3</sup> They looked back, we look forward: they said, 'Here is

<sup>1</sup> In the famous passage, *Par.* xv. 97. Cacciaguida's words:  
 Fiorenza . . .

Si stava in pace, sobria e pudica.

Non avea catenella, non corona.

<sup>2</sup> Thus even the scholar Nicholas de Cusa does so in spite of his Renaissance interests. Pius II, Aeneas Sylvius, may have felt that the Papacy was bound up with the old ideal. At any rate he worked for no new ideal.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Troeltsch (*op. cit.*, p. 326), who points out how different what we call Social Reform is: 'Für die alte Kirche war eine Sozialreform zu schwierig, für die mittelalterliche war sie überflüssig. Sie hat den tatsächlichen Zustand idealisiert und für das wahre, von Vernunft und Offenbarung gleichmässig geforderte, Ideal erklärt.'

the ideal, let us live up to it': we are in doubt as to which ideal is worth living up to. And with our knowledge of the many ideals which men have followed, we find some good and some bad. Our knowledge of history makes us sceptical as to the correctness of our own conceptions of the ideal; whereas in the Middle Ages, the ignorance of history being complete,<sup>1</sup> no one really doubted what was the most desirable political arrangement. Even thinkers like Ockham or Marsilius of Padua, with definite democratic conceptions, were still obsessed by the abstract ideal of Imperial Unity.<sup>2</sup>

I argue then that the ideal of the Middle Ages was really limited or defective in its rigidity. The unity conceived and partly realized was fixed and dead. It was modelled on the dead body of the Roman Empire. It did not allow of new developments of its parts nor of any new meaning of universal Empire and universal Church. But races grow as individuals do, and it is hopeless to compress a growing organism in the swaddling clothes of an inherited political theory. Either the organism is injured or it bursts through its limitations, as Europe did in the Renaissance. The unity of Europe, if desirable, must at least be the unity of a growing tree and not that of a stone; so much would be clear in the abstract. And next,

<sup>1</sup> So complete that Thomas Aquinas, for example, an exceptionally brilliant thinker, can treat the Amazons as evidence for political constitutions, in the *de Reg. Princip.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Poole's *Illustrations of Mediaeval Thought*, and the treatises he quotes in Goldast, *Mon. S. R. Imp.* The conflict against Ecclesiasticism in Marsilius gives him an extreme importance, but for my purpose he may be counted as only another exponent of the ideal of Unity.

mediaeval unity in fact was never realized. The different races grew into different States without any real influence to counteract their tendency to be hostile one to the other. But something must surely have been fatally wrong with an ideal which remained an empty aspiration when forces were arising with which it should have dealt. It was an unrealized ideal because it was too crudely conceived: the unity of civilized humanity cannot mean the submission of every group to one central power. In any case the new States which arose in the fourteenth and grew to power in the fifteenth century could afford to neglect the ideal of common interests and a universal brotherhood.

And yet precisely this crudity of conception in the mediaeval ideal, its weakness and not its strength, has been perpetuated into contemporary politics. It is to be found in the political theory of certain German writers<sup>1</sup> and in the practice of German diplomatists; for among the forces which have gone to establish the unity of the German Empire is the mediaeval ideal of the Holy Roman Empire; and the mistaken elements in that ideal have been perpetuated by a conception of a predominant world-state. But the peace arrived at by such means would be a dead and inorganic unity. It would be the unity of a stone as compared with that of a tree; a unity which flows from some external source of compression rather than an internal force of growth. Thus the weakness in the mediaeval ideal still continues to corrode the popular German idea of a united Europe. To us the mediaeval ideal is still alive and forcible, in so far as we all hope for a real European 'alliance of civilized

<sup>1</sup> Treitschke, and von Bülow's *Imperial Germany*.

nations'; but that is the soul of mediaeval politics. Its bodily expression is and always was crude; for it involved that European unity should mean a European world-power dictating peace and progress in the name of God. The Holy Roman Empire may have been the necessary embodiment of mediaeval unity, but it was always an obstacle to the realization of real unity, and it has become in recent times a fantastic anachronism. The bodily expression of this ideal, then, is now a withered ogre, which stultifies the political idealism of the German peoples. For the mediaeval Empire, though in theory international, was in fact German; and the present German Emperor seems to suffer from an hallucination, which his diplomatists seem to cultivate—that a particular race and even a particular government are called upon to dominate, in the name of God, the society of nations. Unity and peace may be the purpose of such domination; but domination has been conclusively proved by the failure of the mediaeval system to be *not* the right method for attaining unity.

✓ We may still hope to see a united Europe, but not in the form hoped for by the Middle Ages; for that form implied the subordination of many governments to one central power. The unity was external and dictated from above. In the modern ✓ conception the mistakes of Mediaevalism are corrected even while its excellencies are admitted; ✓ for our ideal is a unity of co-operating parts, the ✓ unity of a political organism, not of a fixed and ✓ centralized Caesarism. Indeed, if the modern ✓ German politician who spoke of the German Empire ✓ as a predominant influence in world-politics has

really learnt his lesson from the limited teaching of mediaeval Imperialists, he seems to have caught at precisely those elements in the teaching which were based upon ignorance. The mediaeval thinker did not really know the nature of the Roman Empire which he supposed that he was re-establishing. He imagined it to be an Imperialism subordinating local kingships, and as such it appears in mediaeval politics; but we all know now that Rome had no national governments under her in those parts of the world which developed into mediaeval Europe. Gaul and Britain were not ruled by mediaeval barons and kings when Rome subordinated them. Modern Germany can therefore hardly suppose that the domination of Rome can be repeated now that the nations have developed independent state systems. And again, even the Middle Ages based the power of their centralizing Empire not on force of arms. The very soul of the Empire was its spiritual position, disembodied from any military power. But in the new and false conception unity is made to depend upon the *force of arms* exerted by the Holy German Emperor. The old ideal, therefore, in its crudest form, survives in the ambitions of some German writers, and to its withered antiquity is added the new falsehood of military armament. These political thinkers adopt the worst features of a noble aspiration, and insult their own forefathers by supposing that in the Middle Ages men could see no difference between divine right and force of arms.

The very feebleness of the Holy Roman Empire is a sign of its true value in the development of European politics. For it was a spiritual rather than a military source of unity. It is true that



military domination established the Empire of Charles the Great ; but when the Imperial theory was fully developed the Empire had no military or economic force whatever, and yet it stood for the unity of the civilized world.

The Emperor for generations had always been hopelessly feeble. He could neither enforce peace between princes nor establish any real universal power such as the Church. Politically there has never been such disunion in Europe since the Middle Ages as there was when men everywhere admitted that unity was desirable. But this, so far from making us doubt the value of their ideal, should make us all the more admire its force. For the popular feeling of European brotherhood, to which we have referred above, is a realization of the hope of those divided ancestors of ours ; and it is their dream which, in part at least, has worked its own fulfilment.

The very feebleness of the Emperor gave support to the theory of his exalted position. Few emperors had either wealth or military power. Mere kings might take rank over their vassals by the force of superior arms ; but there was a sacredness which exalted the Emperor far above the need for any such crude criterion of rank as military power or wealth. Such a theory must seem wildly unpolitical in an age such as ours, which admits no test of value except the economic ; but it was a splendid and effective ideal, if not in producing real unity, at least in keeping alive the hope of some other relation between states than that of mere rivalry.

There remains therefore this from among the many ideals of the Middle Ages : European nations

should be considered as a unity in spite of their mutual independence. We are not likely to go back upon the Renaissance conception of a sovereign State with which I shall deal in the next chapter; but we may still retain a conception of European Unity as worth working for. Thus we shall reject the mediaeval conception of a single suzerain or of a single 'State' in Europe, and we shall no longer confuse politics by reference to a supernatural basis for political power such as was implied in the Emperor's relation to the Deity. But although Empire and Emperor have gone and a universal Church with the same relation to all the different political units of government is hardly conceivable, the mediaeval ideal of unity still remains. It must be made more conscious among the peoples of Europe before it can become politically effective; and it must be guarded against possible corruptions which might arise if the contrast of European with other civilizations led us Western nations to make an arrogant and insolent claim to domination over all humanity.

#### A NOTE ON FEUDALISM

It will be noticed that I deliberately set aside any discussion of Feudalism. I do so because my purpose is not to give a complete account of all political ideals, even those of importance in Western Europe, but rather to explain those ideals which are in some way at present effective as ideals. My chief purpose is historical criticism of existing political ideals, not the recording of all ideals which have ever been active: it is therefore a discussion of existing problems, not a complete account of existing facts. It is clear that Feudalism does still affect our

political practice and theory. We cannot escape the fact of social castes and of a land-owning system which are, if not actually feudal, at least the immediate results of Feudalism.<sup>1</sup> And in a complete discussion of political history Feudalism would naturally be given a very important place. For in so far as the past lives in the present, Feudalism is still active and we may take notice of it as a factor in politics.

But *as an ideal* Feudalism is dead. That is to say, I am not aware that any one<sup>2</sup> seriously desires to maintain and develop the relics of feudal tenure or feudal rank. No practical politician would attempt to re-establish the mediaeval relations of man to man, although, as I have said above, there may be much to be said for the mediaeval ideal of the relation of all the national groups in Europe. It is because no one now desires Feudalism that I have omitted it; for I am arguing only as to the actual forces which are changing the present into the future. The past only interests me here in so far as it may contain hints as to this process; and what is no longer desired has no force for present change, even though it may have made this present because it was once desired.

This does not imply that Feudalism was absurd or obstructive to progress. I am not concerned here with political judgement upon the ideals of the

<sup>1</sup> Accepting the word 'Feudalism' in a vague sense. The complete system imagined by nineteenth-century historians I do not believe ever to have existed, but that is another question. For the influence of Mediaevalism in this regard, see Freeman, *Comparative Politics*.

<sup>2</sup> Except a few romantic historians and irrational political writers who do not really count, I think, in the influencing of political thought or action.

past ; and much that is no longer desirable may have been very desirable indeed during the Middle Ages. I am not insulting Feudalism because I omit it. But, on the other hand, I should not take it for granted that because Feudalism existed therefore it was good, even in the Middle Ages. Many things which men have desired were not good, and that not simply from our point of view but from theirs. I can quite conceive that Feudalism was obstructive, as I am certain that many other mediaeval ideals were mistaken and evil. Things were desired which ought not to have been desired ; men worked for and realized institutions which were evil. I am not then implying either a favourable or an unfavourable judgement of Feudalism as an ideal, but I do imply that one judgement or the other must be passed.

I am aware that such a statement involves that there is a standard by which we can judge institutions and actions and ideals. Good institutions can be distinguished from evil, largely if not entirely in consequences, quite apart from any question as to what has or has not existed. But this larger issue I have not space to discuss. I mention it simply that it may be understood that in my omission of Feudalism I am aware that I imply the existence of an ethical as well as an historical judgement, although I do not give an ethical judgement but only an historical judgement in omitting it. That is to say, it can be discovered whether Feudalism was good or bad, and I do not think I assert either one or the other in omitting to deal with Feudalism, but I assert that historically and as a fact of present political experience Feudalism is no longer an ideal.

It should be clear further that Feudalism was not

only an established fact in the Middle Ages. It was also an ideal in the same sense that Socialism or Individualism is an ideal at present. Men not only saw that society was arranged according to inherited status, but they desired to maintain and develop this arrangement. The reformers complained that villeins were not duly submissive to being governed for their own good; that barons were rebellious and that 'the order of knighthood is become mere disorder'.<sup>1</sup> Langland tells the aristocracy, 'Go hunte hardiliche to hares and to foxes',<sup>2</sup> since they were neglecting to clear the countryside of pests, which was their duty. And thus an elaborate conception grew up of a perfect Feudalism in which every man knew his place and the higher rank held its place by service to all its dependants. William Morris represented the revolution of John Ball and mediaeval Socialism in saying that 'No man is good enough to be another man's master'. The ideal Feudalism, on the contrary, held the no less noble gospel that no man is too good to be another man's servant.

But both as a splendid aspiration and as a sordid political arrangement the ideal of Feudalism is dead.

<sup>1</sup> Peter of Blois.

<sup>2</sup> Langland, *Piers*, Passus vi. 30. The duty is reciprocal, of course, for Piers is to 'swynke and swete and sowe for us bothe'. See also in Passus i. 94:

Kynges and kniztes · shulde kepe it bi resoun,  
Riden and rappe down · in reumes aboute,  
And taken transgressores · and tyen hem faste.

## CHAPTER VI

### RENAISSANCE SOVEREIGNTY

IN modern political thought and action the rivalry between the independent States is a governing factor. Each State is jealous for its own free and full development, and its 'foreign' policy is an adjustment of powers among the existing groups.

This is a situation which can only be explained by reference to the Renaissance. The Holy Roman Empire and the unity of mediaeval Europe gradually faded from the minds even of the lawyers. Practical men had long set aside the conception of a single European realm before the theorists were able to supply a statement of a new ideal. Different independent governments had been long established in England, France, Spain, and parts of Germany and Italy, before any clear conception appeared as to the claims of the newly-born States of Europe. Jurists continued to pay lip-service to an Empire which did not exist even as an ideal any longer ; while more and more the differentiation of Europe was proceeding.

And when at last the new ideal was clearly seen it appeared as a doctrine of sovereignty. This word therefore I shall use as symbolic of our political inheritance from the Renaissance ; but I must use it in its widest meaning, for it must be made to include both (1) the conception of an independent and established government, generally in the form

of a monarchy, and (2) the first beginnings of the sentiment of Nationalism which implies that each separate group of men should be allowed a distinct development of its own. I shall, however, put aside for the present any detailed contrast between the Renaissance ideal of an independent State and the modern conception of Nationalism ; I shall speak here of the state primarily and not of the nation, leaving it to be understood that I am referring to distinctions in law and government and not to those of race or language or tradition.

#### **The Ideal in Modern Politics.**

Modern politics is much concerned with sovereign States. By that we mean, I suppose, that States with established governments are equals. It is, in the first place, a repudiation of the mediaeval conception of an overlord. No sovereign State would be expected to take rank lower than any other, however larger or more powerful ; each State is absolute so far as its internal affairs are concerned, and each is governed by some central authority. Not only is this a fact accomplished, but it is also believed to be a situation which is admirable and should be developed. No one now protests against the distinctions and differences of law and government in different countries as, for example, Dante did ; for civilization seems to depend on the maintenance of many separate governments.

Hence arises the conception of an international law, which concerns the relation of State to State but does not imply any power superior to the States which may enforce its commands. Such

a law is as yet hardly more than a collection of statements as to what generally occurs or of admirable and almost ineffective aspirations. But in modern politics we could reckon upon the feeling that there are some things which no civilized State could do—at least with respect to another civilized State. The humanity which limits all warfare between such States has not really been extended yet to govern the treatment of ‘savages’; for political sentiment grows but slowly, and few men feel that it degrades a civilized State to wage war savagely even against savages.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless it is a great gain that we draw the line somewhere and feel, however vaguely, that States must adhere honestly to their treaty obligations or wage only moderate war. At any rate we suppose that all States are bound by such laws, whether or not any power exists which may enforce them.

And again in ‘foreign’ politics, as we provincially call it, we suppose always that something corresponding to a ‘Balance of Power’ should be maintained. For if any one State were to become too powerful, even though it were still theoretically equal with the others, it could so influence the development of the others as not to leave them free. Theoretical independence is valueless unless it involves a real power to carry out one’s own will; and were any one State to become supreme in military or economic power, no other State would be really able to govern itself in its own way. Quite apart from actual invasion or conquest,

<sup>1</sup> I need not make the obvious references to the use of exploding bullets, &c., which appears good enough for the mere savage, perhaps because the civilized could retaliate in kind and the savage cannot.



a preponderant influence in Europe would check local differentiation.<sup>1</sup>

This then is the present ideal; that each sovereign State should enter into equal relations with all others; that each should have free development on its own lines, and that there should be no State so powerful as to threaten the independence of any other. It is an ideal because still the statesman is concerned to maintain and develop the situation as it now stands; and although it hardly enters into the calculation of the ordinary voter, it appears as a vague fear of foreign domination and a desire for complete safety for his own type of law and government.

#### **The Ideal of Sovereignty in the Past.**

In order to discover the meaning of this ideal or guiding conception we should have to go back to the period during which the mediaeval system of thought and practice was breaking down. This was not a sudden change, but a slow and hardly conscious growth; for even though the philosophers of the Renaissance knew that a revolution of thought was proceeding, and even though the Humanist scholars gave themselves an unwarranted position of importance in the obvious progress of a civilization, and even though explorers discovered new worlds, the great political change from tribal division governed by vague aspirations towards unity to a complete severance of the European nations was largely unconscious. Not until the

<sup>1</sup> The particular instance of this political sentiment is, of course, in the counting-up of ships in England as compared to the ships of any two or three possible Continental allies.

change had occurred was any one really conscious of its direction. Then only did political thinkers in the attempt at finding an excuse for accomplished fact happen upon the statement of a new ideal.

The first necessity was the recognition of national distinctions, embodied in the legal phrase 'sovereign States'. That is to say, politicians and jurists were compelled to allow that politically autonomous groups existed, whose relations one with another were not feudal and could not be explained according to the theory of the mediaeval Empire. Thus the distinction of the interests of different groups was the basis for the new ideal of divided sovereignty, but the group was hardly considered as more than the subjects to be governed. The different States were to have their intercourse arranged, but no one seemed as yet to suspect that the State was the people and not the officials. Jurists assumed that the State was the king or at least the established government.

Here, as in modern times, the ideal of Nationalism was only in part expressed by international jurisprudence, because 'of the unnoticed distinction between the nation and the State. This distinction is still important: it had its origin at the Renaissance; it was an inheritance even then from the arbitrary distinctions of the past; and it will continue to trouble politicians until every State is the natural organization of a distinct nation.

In general a nation is a natural growth: it is a group of families or individuals with the same traditions. But a State is an organized government.<sup>1</sup> It will be clear then that the State *may* be

<sup>1</sup> The organization may also of course be a natural growth, but it may be suddenly established; whereas it

the organized nation, but the nation *may* be subordinated to a State-organization not its own. Such is our modern conception of the distinction; but no such distinction was clear to the thinkers of the Renaissance, and the vast majority of the governed, who were led by the thinkers or driven by the officials, could not possibly as yet have distinguished the right of every government to be independent from the right of every nation to have its own government. Renaissance sovereignty therefore was a State ideal rather than a national ideal, but it had within it implicitly the later ideal of modern Nationalism.<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that there was no national sentiment—there clearly was in England and France of the fourteenth century; but this national sentiment went to support established dynasties and State sovereignty, and did not involve the expression in the government of the will of the group governed.

#### The Ideal as embodied in events.

In the later Middle Ages the distinct groups of the European civilization were sufficiently clear, although there was no doctrine yet even of the independent sovereignty of each group. When Boniface VIII was frustrated in his attempts at universal power by the law of England and the military activity of the French king, it was obvious takes many years to make a nation. The distinction is further explained in the chapter on 'Nationalism'.

<sup>1</sup> This is not clearly stated, but is implied in Pollard's *Factors in Modern History*. It is surely an anachronism to say that the fourteenth century was 'the first epoch of English Nationalism', *ibid.* p. 22. But perhaps England accidentally combined sovereignty with Nationalism—a fortunate chance.

that new forces had arisen in politics.<sup>1</sup> The English State and the French State were clearly separate entities having a life of their own. And again, when for seventy years the Papacy was at Avignon and the Pope was under the direct influence of the French king it was clear that a contest was going on between the old Universalism and the new French State; for the French State almost captured the prestige of the mediaeval Papacy.<sup>2</sup> Then followed the Schism of the West, and Italians fought against Frenchmen for the Papacy while the new nations took sides—England and Germany being for the Roman Pope, Scotland and France for the Pope at Avignon. Such events are significant of the distinct political groups which were coming into power.

I need not cite all the examples of local sovereignty which are to be found in the history of the later Renaissance. The French kings soon established a powerful central government, using the popular, almost national, sentiment to displace the feudal barons,<sup>3</sup> and finally, in the seventeenth century, attempting to crush this very popular sentiment. The last stage of Renaissance sovereignty

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the resistance of England and France to the taxation of the local clergy by Boniface VIII, and the final tragedy at Anagni on September 8, 1303.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the Templars were suppressed by the Avignon Pope almost at the bidding of the French king.

<sup>3</sup> 'Well-ordered States and wise princes have taken every care not to drive the nobles to desperation and to keep the people satisfied. The best-ordered of our times is France . . . in which the first good institution is the parliament. He who founded the kingdom, knowing the ambition of the nobility, considered that a bit in their mouths would be necessary to hold them in.' Machiavelli, *Prince*, ch. xix.

was reached in France when, as in the case of Louis XIV, the State could be identified with the King.

But the same stages may be marked in the events of English history between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The national sentiment was gradually formed under Edward III and Henry V, in the usual primitive manner, by warlike opposition to 'foreigners'. And upon this sentiment as a basis the Tudors established not popular or national government but Renaissance sovereignty. The Armada episode was perhaps an occasion for national enthusiasm, but this was speedily transformed by cunning dynastic statesmen into a support for personal sovereignty; until at last the true value of the conception of group independence displaced that of personal sovereignty in the transformation of politics from 1640 to 1688.

In Spain the situation was more difficult, for besides the mediaeval life of cities and of local lordships there was the presence of an alien race and government before the Renaissance sovereignty of Ferdinand and Isabella. The unity of the group there, more even than elsewhere, depended upon the single rule of a sovereign; and Spanish national development was very confused until the upheaval of Napoleonic times.

In Italy Renaissance sovereignty gave rise to minute divisions of local government which separated peoples of the same race, language, and tradition. And in Germany the same tendency produced the division which made warfare so

<sup>1</sup> The theme is well stated in Pollard's *Factors in Modern History*, but he does not seem to distinguish clearly between (1) State sovereignty and (2) national independence.

prominent and victory by foreigners, as in Napoleon's time, so easy. The 'cuius regio eius religio' of Augsburg,<sup>1</sup> then, did not mean that each *nation* should choose its own form of religion, but that each district should adopt the religion of its *ruler*. And this considered not the interest of the governed group but that of the local prince. Thus whereas the English and French States of the eighteenth century united many nations, the German nation was divided into many States; and thus Renaissance sovereignty is seen to have been in part a valid appeal to local and geographically or racially distinct interests and in part an historical excuse for arbitrary non-geographical and non-racial dynastic divisions.

#### Interpretation of the Renaissance Ideal.

According to my thesis, however, what actually occurred must in some sense have been due to the supply of a political need. The ideal, even in the limited form in which it was conceived, must have been one of the motive-forces which established Renaissance sovereignty. But it is clear that this sovereignty was by no means conceived as the real sovereignty of the group; nor is it possible without exaggeration to say that Renaissance kings and princes believed themselves to hold their position at the will of their subjects. In what sense, then, was a political need supplied by the establishment of the new ideal in place of the mediaeval desire for unity? The need supplied was that of certain, powerful, and therefore central

<sup>1</sup> In 1555 this motto became prominent. Note the use of *regio* in Hugo Grotius, cf. below, p. 140. It means 'kingship', not 'region' or territory.

government ; and men were willing enough to give their princes any rights they chose to claim in order that the country might be freed from the perpetual contests of the local nobles. For it must be recognized that the mediaeval conception of unity led in fact to a very minute subdivision of political power. While the ultimate temporal power was believed to come direct from God to one man, the Emperor, in fact the actual political power was held by innumerable local magnates. And so the people of one speech and one tradition unconsciously groping towards unity found themselves in opposition to the subdivision of their country ; and the king or prince was accepted as the instrument for attaining permanent riddance from the brawls of the nobility. Thus in England the Tudor sovereignty followed hard upon the Wars of the Roses ; and in France, as Machiavelli thought, the king used the people against the nobles or, as we may now put it, the people unconsciously used the king. So also in Italy the Medici and other tyrants really supplied a need in providing at least a settled government in place of the continual bickering of parties. I do not mean that the mass of men agreed together to establish a king or prince in order to establish local sovereignty and rid themselves of disunion and civil strife. The process was almost unconscious, but the want was felt—men really were troubled at the wars of nobles or the controversies of party and circumstance. The accidental power at the moment of one feudal lord or the accidental success of one party suggested the solution. There were the beginnings of local central government, and these seemed worth development. The mass of men

could not have recognized, even if they had been told, how much they were giving when they gave themselves into the hands of the sovereign; and the thinkers told them, as we shall see, that it was right to give their all. Now we are too much influenced by the French Revolution to approve of the complete alienation of power by the group governed; but in the Renaissance experience had not yet shown what limitations had to be forced upon the sovereignty of princes. And therefore the history is not one of crude tyranny established in defiance of national rights and popular feeling. So to view the Renaissance is to go back to the very limited knowledge of Rousseau. We must acknowledge that even the most absolute tyrant of those times supplied a popular need and was accepted, not irrationally, as a substitute for the discord of nobles and parties. For this reason the divine commission of the mediaeval Emperor was in theory taken over by the Renaissance princes and kings, and we begin to hear elaborate proofs of the Divine Right of kings. The Emperor had been directly commissioned by God, and now the local kings were; but the theocratic theory of sovereignty remained much the same. So also the insignia of Empire were taken over by the local princes,<sup>1</sup> and the ambiguous position of the mediaeval Emperor with respect to the ecclesiastical organization was adopted and developed by the kings of England and the princes of Germany.

The evil of local difference even within the group

<sup>1</sup> The ball or globe held by a local king has no meaning; but when it was held by the Holy Roman Emperor it meant sovereignty over the whole world. So of the purple of the Caesars, &c.



formed by one blood, language, and tradition, was obvious enough; and the vague hope was in some form of central government. But there was another side to the movement of the Renaissance. Not only was government made strong and central, but it was made absolute, and this produced the diversity of independent states. Why was Europe divided and not unified at the Renaissance? Partly at least because the Church and the Empire of mediaeval Unity tended to make 'inroads upon local governmental authority'.<sup>1</sup> The Empire was politically weak, but the bare theory of subordination tended to weaken the local prince; and the State-system of the Church really did interfere with the exercise of a local authority in politics. It was necessary to break this system which weakened the effectiveness of government.

Hence the movement towards absolute equality of independent sovereigns was in part religious, and a new Church system accompanied and supported the expression of the new political ideal. The Reformation and the establishment of diverse religions did indeed influence the establishment of diverse States,<sup>2</sup> but it is not necessary for my purpose here to look beyond the political evil to find the reason for the political ideal. Even in France, where the religion remained in name

<sup>1</sup> Figgis, *Gerson to Grotius*, p. 15. It will be seen that I do not follow the writer in treating 'political ideas as a branch of ecclesiastical history' (p. 31).

<sup>2</sup> 'Luther in the world of politics transferred to the temporal sovereign the halo of sanctity which had hitherto been mainly the privilege of the ecclesiastical' (Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 81). The limits of my thesis forbid that I should attempt to discuss the reflection of the political ideal in Luther and Calvin. Cf. Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, p. 724 et seq.

Catholic and therefore mediaeval, since it was opposed to other *equal* religions, it was no longer in fact universal. A Catholicism which is controversial is only another form of Protestantism. And the State system can use one or the other in the interests of absolute local government. The political ideal pursued its way. Europe was no longer to be a hegemony even in theory: it was to be a diversity of equal independent States, for thus only could security of law and effective consideration of local interests be maintained.

Such is the sign of the ideal in the events of the time; for these events are largely the result of the half-formed desires of masses and the limited conceptions of practical politicians. The movement of the time is thus hardly at all a conscious adoption of certain means for attaining a clearly conceived end; it is a clumsy experiment guided by an unstable desire. But the ideal is there all the time as a motive-force, unrecognized or misrepresented.

#### **The Ideal in Literature.**

The work of contemporary thinkers, however, gives another expression of the Renaissance ideal, in their effort to acknowledge distinctions of local interest.

In the literature of the early Renaissance the *De Pace Fidei* of Nicholas de Cusa embodies the tendency.<sup>1</sup> That treatise, which complains of the disunion of Europe, supposes that the different nations are made to send each a representative to the heavenly Court to argue before God each for a distinct view. Thus the German,

<sup>1</sup> This was written about 1454.

the Englishman, the Frenchman, and the Italian are given different points of view, along with the Turk and the Arab. The Englishman complains against the Sacramental system and the Arab against the Trinity: Cusanus thus recognizes that local distinctions were making the old mediaeval Universalism almost impossible. This, however, may not be held to imply more than the old recognition of tribal differences.

The governments of the different divisions of Europe were in fact independent, but this does not appear to be justified in theory until Jean Bodin produced in 1577 his *Six Livres de la République*.<sup>1</sup> The conception of government there expressed need not concern us in all its details: it is partly traditional and partly a reasoned statement of observed facts. But the whole force of the work is concentrated upon the explanation of the phrase 'puissance souveraine'.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the State being clear, and the existence of subordinate groups, we read (Book I, chap. 8): 'Il est icy besoin de former la definition de souveraineté, parce qu'il n'y a ny jurisconsulte ny philosophe politique qui l'ayt definie; iaçoit que c'est le point principal, et le plus necessaire d'être entendu au traité de la République.' The conception of sovereignty, however, is used in chapters preceding this discussion of its meaning. And from the whole we learn that sovereignty contains two elements, the first being

<sup>1</sup> The edition I use in what follows is the corrected Lyons edition of 1580.

<sup>2</sup> In the definition 'République est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs mesuages et de ce qui leur est commun avec puissance souveraine', Bodin explains he is not describing an ideal like Plato's or 'Thomas le More's' (p. 5).

the independence and equivalent value of the organized groups which are 'sovereign'. Bodin takes this for granted even in his illustrations in such a way as to make it clear that absolutely independent governments were in existence and were recognized as good.

He sees the contrast between local sovereignty and the old Imperial sovereignty; even though he makes, in the Renaissance manner, the Empire only one among many equal sovereignties.<sup>1</sup> He says that the power, then recognized, for States to make treaties implies the sovereignty of several separate powers independent of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> The Latins, he says, 'held that there was only one State', and some wrongly hold that the Swiss Cantons are one State, whereas they are thirteen 'with separate sovereignty'.<sup>3</sup> But this is to recognize one of the new features of political life in the Renaissance as a good to be increased and developed.

Secondly, sovereignty is 'absolute and perpetual power', by which Bodin appears to hint at the necessity for subordinating local officers, townships, or interests, to the purpose for which the whole organized group exists. This power, it is taken for granted, is in the hands of one man; although it might theoretically rest with the popular assembly.<sup>4</sup> The sovereignty of the State readily

<sup>1</sup> 'L'Empereur ne s'attribue pas aussi la souveraineté sur les Princes' (p. 94).

'Nous ferons pareil iugement de tous les Princes et seigneurs desquels il y a appel à l'Empire et chambre imperiale, qu'ils ne sont pas souverains' (p. 164, Book I, ch. x).

<sup>2</sup> Book I, ch. vii, *in fine*.

<sup>3</sup> 2, *ibid.* p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> 'En l'estat populaire où la souveraineté gist en l'assemblée du peuple' (p. 150).

becomes by an almost imperceptible change of terms the sovereignty of the Prince. That is the Renaissance embodiment of the ideal of certain and centralized power ; and it is easy to see what was the evil against which this conception was urged. Village laws and baronial government, divergence of custom and interest within the group, inherited from the feudal tradition, made it better to suppose one absolute and predominant central power to be the real basis of civilized life.

‘The mark of sovereignty is the power of making law without the consent of any superior or equal’, and under this is included the power of ‘peace and war’.<sup>1</sup> It matters nothing to this sovereignty that the people are sometimes consulted, as in England ;<sup>2</sup> and indeed, ‘when the need is urgent the Prince ought not to wait for the consent of the people’.

Of the two elements in sovereignty Bodin seems to develop chiefly that regarding the *internal* arrangement of the State. The later work of Hugo de Groot contains the clearest presentation of the second element of sovereignty—the equality and independence of several sovereign groups. The *De Iure Belli et Pacis* marks an immense advance in the conception of the European State-system, but the ideal is that of the time, not of the author alone.

The details of the argument need not be dis-

<sup>1</sup> Book I, ch. x, pp. 154 and 155. At beginning: ‘There is nothing greater on earth after God than Sovereign Princes.’

<sup>2</sup> P. 97. Bodin refers to Henry VIII, and he says that M. Dail, the English ambassador, assured him that the king accepted or refused a law as it seemed good to him.

cussed, since my purpose is only to show how the conception of a sovereign State is established; and it will be recognized that here, as in the case of other ideals, two statements are implied. First, the separate sovereign State is recognized by de Groot<sup>1</sup> as actually existing and, next, he wishes to maintain and develop such sovereignty. The book opens with the statement that jurists have formerly considered (1) the law common to all men and (2) the law peculiar to each group, but that no one has yet considered the relation of group to group. These relations are generally warlike, as it seemed in the Renaissance, but the author perceived that each group 'had need of the other'.<sup>2</sup>

Sovereign political power is defined as 'that of which the acts are not under the jurisdiction of any other'.<sup>3</sup> Such power makes a State sovereign, which is called a *civitas*,<sup>4</sup> which again is 'the perfect group'.

We might suppose that we had here a theory of the separate right of each group of men, but the author goes on to attack those who say that the sovereign power resides in 'the people'. Some, he says, have conceived that the people can even

<sup>1</sup> The edition used in what follows is Whewell's of 1853. The text is vaguely represented by a sort of translation at the foot of each page, but the subtlety of the original is largely lost. The book was published in 1625. It has been often remarked that it was the Netherlands which produced Grotius, as though there one might catch most effectively the spirit of the Renaissance protest against world-absolutism.

<sup>2</sup> Prol., par. 22.

<sup>3</sup> 'Summa (potestas civilis) est cuius actus alterius iuri non subsunt,' I, ch. iii. 7. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. "'civitas" quam perfectum coetum esse diximus'.

call their kings to account; which is absurd, because each group has either freely (*voluntate*) chosen the form of government or accepted it from the hands of superior force. In either case what is established as government cannot be questioned. 'The people' now living are the *same State* as that which hypothetically made the choice;<sup>1</sup> and the choice, once made, binds absolutely, even as a woman may indeed choose a husband but, once chosen, that husband must be absolutely obeyed.<sup>2</sup>

Here is no gospel of popular or national development; for the group is thought of simply as the basis of a separate government. That government is, of course, for the good of the governed, but only as the guardian must consider the interests of his ward.<sup>3</sup> No right of judgement remains to the people.

What then is an independent group or a sovereign State? 'A people is that sort of body which consists of things distant from one another, is subject to one man, has "one habit" as Plutarch says, and one spirit as Paul the jurist says. This spirit or "habit" (*ἔξις*) in a people is the full and perfect association of the civilized life, whose first result is its sovereignty (*imperium*), the bond which makes the State, the living spirit which so many breathe as Seneca has it.'<sup>4</sup> The actual form

<sup>1</sup> II, ch. ix, par. 3 'Civitates sunt immortales': except that (ch. iv) they may be conquered or (ch. vi) the group may have its rights taken away.

<sup>2</sup> I, ch. viii, 1, par. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. I, ch. viii, par. 13. 2.

<sup>4</sup> 'Populus est ex eorum corporum genere quod ex distantibus constat, unque homini subiectum est, quod habet ἔξιν ut Plutarchus, spiritum unum ut Paulus iuris consultus loquitur. Is autem spiritus sive ἔξις in populo est vitæ civilis consociatio plena atque perfecta

of government does not make any difference:<sup>1</sup> it is the State organized in some form which is supreme, and of such States there are and should be many.

The third great work on Renaissance sovereignty is the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes.<sup>2</sup> The details of the argument again need not concern us, since for my present purpose the ideal implied is what is of most interest. According to Hobbes, men are naturally hostile one to the other, but they make an alliance for mutual protection. Thus the State exists for the control of egoistic impulse and the protection of the group. The need, Hobbes felt, was strong central government: that it rested ultimately on the will of the governed was a secondary consideration. The facts of the time showed disunion and weakness in face of foreign rivalry; the ideal therefore was Renaissance sovereignty. 'The final cause, End or Designe of men (who naturally love Liberty and Dominion over others) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves (in which we see them live in Commonwealths) is the foresight of their own preservation and of a more contented life thereby, that is to say, of getting themselves out of the miserable condition of Warre.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus if confusion would otherwise prevail, it is worth while to sacrifice one's liberty in order to have 'contentment'. The ideal implied is a central

cuius prima productio est suum imperium, vinculum per quod respublica cohaeret, spiritus vitalis quem tot millia trahunt ut Seneca loquitur,' Lib. II, ch. ix, par. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. ch. viii 'Neque refert quomodo gubernetur, regione an plurium an multitudinis imperio'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Graham Wallas, *The Great Society*, ch. vi, for a criticism of Hobbes; but Mr. Wallas does not give sufficient force to the evil against which Hobbes was protesting.

<sup>3</sup> *Leviathan*, ch. xvii.



government which is strong enough to overawe the tendency to disorder, which Hobbes thought was 'natural', but we know to have been simply the tendency of his time. The central power (sovereign) having been established, 'Liberty lieth in those things which the Sovereign hath praetermitted',<sup>1</sup> and 'sovereignty cannot be forfeited'.<sup>2</sup> 'And though of so unlimited a power men may fancy many evill consequences, yet the consequences of the want of it which is perpetuall warre of every man against his neighbour is worse.'<sup>3</sup>

Hobbes never speaks as though he loved government or absolute sovereignty: at best it was not so bad as what would happen without it, and that is small praise if one considers what primitive barbarism Hobbes thought was a real danger. But the general conception of the ideal is clear. It is that of some settled and secure central government which would abolish for ever the private wars of the Middle Ages and the restless ambitions of the Renaissance.

Thus in thought as well as in fact, and at last in ideal, European civilization was made to depend upon several independent sovereign governments. Distinction and difference seemed to be more important than unity, and politics became a balancing of powers.

#### Criticism.

The result of all this separation into distinct groups was both good and bad. It was good because each group was better able to develop its own opportunities when it was freed from indefinite connections with other groups. Local dialects became official and literary languages, local customs

<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, ch. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ch. xviii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ch. xx.

became established laws, and the interest of the governed was more excited in proportion as men felt themselves closer to the representatives of absolute and almost divine power.

But the division was pernicious in so far as independence meant continuous opposition between the groups. This may in a sense have been 'necessary' for the independent national consciousness to develop, but it is dangerous to say that any evil which has occurred was 'necessary'. For if such a statement only means that one cannot change what has occurred, then it is a platitude; if it implies that one cannot prevent what is going to occur, then it is false.

The fact remains that opposition between the groups has often kept back that development of the groups which is the purpose of independence. The result is that we are burdened with an absurd Renaissance conception of the 'Balance of Power'. Every group is regarded as naturally desirous of destroying every weaker group, and diplomacy and international politics are still obsessed with this primitive conception of sovereignty. The independence of States was thought of as the independence of individuals may be imagined to have been conceived in primitive times—as though no man could be independent without destroying his neighbour. And since the new States were not strong enough to destroy their rivals, each desperately began to arm itself for internecine warfare in case an opportunity should ever occur of successful destruction of another State.

The limitations in this conception of independent States are quite obvious. For there was no clear idea of the group as the source and purpose of the

distinct law and government. Nationalism had not yet arisen, and groups were distinguished not by their real characters, but by their established governments, or—worse still—by the family which ruled them.

Renaissance sovereignty thus meant to men of that time not the right of a distinct people but the independence of a local government; and this narrow conception led directly to the dynastic wars which followed the wars of religion.

The balance of power was maintained not by common agreement between the peoples concerned, but by the marriages of insignificant and unintelligent princelings: the land and the wealth of Europe was imagined to belong, in some fantastic sense, to the families among whom they were partitioned as sources of income. And yet these families were not always villainous or even self-seeking. The ideals of the time established their position, and all men looked to them as the only possible maintainers of law and government.<sup>1</sup>

The dynastic conception of sovereignty was closely related to the personal conception; and of this the *Principe* of Machiavelli is a sufficient statement.<sup>2</sup> That work is not a reflection of an ideal, but an expression of its crudest embodiment in fact. Indeed it is clear that the ideal of several independent governments is misrepresented and almost travestied by the Florentine diplomatist. It is sufficient to note that his treatise was not intended

<sup>1</sup> Thus the Renaissance prince is not a tyrant: he is accepted by the majority as at least the less of two evils; arbitrary, non-popular, but effective government and absolute confusion.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. i, ch. vi.

to deal with what we should call morality. For good and evil had for him no meaning in the realm of politics. The *Principe* is, on the other hand, a subtle analysis of the actual principles governing Italian politics during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and, had the author considered the policy of princes in England or Germany of the same date, his conclusions would not have been very different.

The conception of separate independent States had been speedily reduced to the dependence of each group upon an absolute sovereign, and the purpose of politics was the maintenance and development of that absolute power. Occasionally an idealist might be troubled as to 'the good of the governed', but the majority until the end of the seventeenth century were quite satisfied that the governor should consider his own interest. It would at least be to his interest that the people should be either well enough governed to be satisfied or too weak to protest;<sup>1</sup> and as Machiavelli puts it, 'It is best to be both loved and feared; but it is much safer for the prince to be feared than to be loved when one of the two has to be dispensed with'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus in this extremely candid mind the ideal of Renaissance sovereignty, as understood by contemporary practical politicians, was very far from being a gospel of Nationalism or of the interest of the distinct group. It was a crude governmental theory of small principalities, most of which had suddenly arisen. We cannot then suppose that the

<sup>1</sup> 'When neither property nor honour is touched, the majority of men live content and the prince has only to contend with the ambition of a few whom he can curb with ease in many ways.' Mach., *Principe*, ch. xix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ch. xvii.

work of Machiavelli is an adequate account of the Renaissance ideal, since it is much more correct historically to find this conception in the work of Bodin or de Groot; but in 'the Prince' the essential limitations of the ideal are most obvious. The anti-popular tendency of Machiavelli was not peculiar to him; and from that tendency our international politics still suffer. It was a dangerous mistake to neglect the interest of the group governed in establishing the independence of the group-government.

The last and most criminal application of the same mistake was the partition of Poland. In cynical disregard or in barbarous ignorance of the existence of national character, tradition and ideals, the official statesmen of civilized Europe dismembered an important group, whose services at least they might have remembered if they had not intelligence enough to see how much more the Poles might yet do for civilization at large. The partition of a single people was made, as though the sovereignty of a State had nothing at all to do with the people, as though established rulers or governments could take over peoples or countries to be their property; and civilized Europe may yet have to pay heavily for permitting the crime of diplomatists and dynastic 'Statesmen' <sup>1</sup> or refusing to make any amends for it. Our ancestors have left us their mistakes as well as their successes.

From a conception of the sovereign State so limited and so grossly embodied it may seem that

<sup>1</sup> I use the word 'Statesman' with reference to the distinction between a 'State' and a Nation. We need a new word for a man who is able to grasp the spirit of a people as opposed to the interest of a government.

we have inherited nothing of any worth. And yet it was a step towards our modern Europe with all its variety of local development. Political ideals are but slowly formed and at their first appearance they are generally so crude as to be almost monstrous; but in the course of time they are made more presentable. So the Renaissance conception of sovereignty has itself been modified into the modern ideal that each civilized State should develop on its own lines its own law and government. And even without any reference to Nationality, in cases as in the British Isles where nations so different as the English and the Irish form one State, it has been of advantage that the general principles of social justice and governmental administration should have been worked out without interference from external conquerors or any such universal claims as those of the mediaeval Pope and Emperor. Thus even in a non-national State such as Austria something has been gained through the dependence of all the races upon the personal sovereignty of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

We must allow also that in spite of the opposition of the Renaissance theorists the theory of independent local sovereignty made it possible for the later ideal of Nationalism to arise. It was easier for the people to express their will under a local domination than it would have been if vast territorial power had supported an established and non-popular government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It must be understood that personal sovereignty of this kind is not necessarily pernicious though the sense of the democratic source for sovereignty may be forgotten: for devotion to a person may be a cause of peace.

<sup>2</sup> Thus it was easier for Nationalism to arise in England

Finally the Renaissance established the utility of settled government. By many nowadays what is established is suspected, but that attitude seems to be an inheritance from the limited conceptions of the French Revolutionary theorists. By some, on the other hand, what is established is regarded as sacred, and this is an inheritance from the Renaissance. Both attitudes are mistaken, for what exists is not either necessarily good or necessarily bad. Facts are valued by reference to an ethical criterion ; and so an established government must be judged by reference to its effects on the governed, some of which are likely to promote happiness and others not. The balance of good or evil thus estimated will show whether it is to be opposed or maintained. Therefore we all believe nowadays in the right of revolution for extreme cases. There is nevertheless something to be said for any form of government which is powerful enough to maintain order and thus check civil strife or the extreme rivalry of individuals. We not only accept such a government as good, but we desire to maintain it and to increase its power. This force for local or racial unity is also a force for resistance against any

in 1688 and onwards, than it was in Italy in 1860, where Austrian government was more powerful. Thus also 'small States' are more susceptible to the views of the majority than are vast aggregates of different races under a central power. In the same way one may argue that, in spite of the fact that the 'small States' of Europe have become great Empires, Renaissance sovereignty gave them a period in which they were independent 'small States', and it was during that period that the great political work was done which we generally use in modern times. National liberty and democratic government, as well as art and science, all developed under the 'small State' system which followed the Renaissance.

predominance of one type of individuals against another ; and for this reason also we should maintain and develop it. But these are merely the guiding conceptions of Renaissance sovereignty, purged of their connection with arbitrary personal rule and anti-democratic tendencies. This therefore is our inheritance from the Renaissance in the political life of the present.



## CHAPTER VII

### REVOLUTIONARY RIGHTS

THE 'Rights of Man' is a phrase with definite historical atmosphere about it : for the date of its great power is already long past. It helped to create the two great Republics of modern times in France and America ; and yet even in these, so swift has been the development that the old magic has gone out of the words. The hypothetical Man of the Revolution is now thought a meaningless abstraction and rights are but shadows of duty.

There survives, however, in modern life a definite ideal from the days of the French Revolution. We are too far away to be terrified as our grandfathers were of the sansculottes, and one could hardly bring a shudder to the heart even of a country parson by speaking of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality.

#### **Modern Ideal of Equality.**

The ideal involved concerns the relation of one individual to another : for even though there was much said about the State by the theorists of the Revolution, it was generally conceived simply as a collection of individuals ; and although revolutionary France set about the destruction of tyrants in other countries, there was no new conception expressed of the relation of these national groups of men one to the other.<sup>1</sup> What chiefly moved men

<sup>1</sup> The last sentence of Rousseau's *Contrat social* acknowledges the further issue as to the relation between States with which he feels he cannot deal (' trop vaste pour ma courte vue ').

to enthusiasm concerning the Rights of Man was a conception of the individual having freedom enough to develop himself and equality of opportunity as his basis for intercourse with others. All those changes which appear in date-and-fact history as the English Revolutions of 1640 and 1688, and the French Revolution of 1789, were really motived by the same ideal. There was the same vague and, in England, unconscious striving after the political equality of all adults, and the same indefinite and in part mistaken conception of the independent individual. This is the ideal which I shall call revolutionary, not indeed because it is more subversive of the orderly progress of civilization than any other, but chiefly because of its embodiment in that French movement which is still called *par excellence* the Revolution. It involves perhaps a kind of philosophical Individualism such as was common in the Enlightenment; it is as reckless a faith in the dictates of the individual conscience as was the faith of Immanuel Kant. But I shall keep the word 'Individualism' as the name for a more modern ideal. And on the other hand, the revolutionary ideal implies much that is now connected with Socialism, but this also I must leave for later treatment.

It must be my first task therefore to show what conception in modern politics belongs in the history of development by date of birth to the revolutionary period. This conception I think will be found in the modern view of the minimum requisite for human life in society; and if one word may be chosen as expressing the ideal it must be 'Equality'. The implied opposite is a situation in which some men had much and most had too little. Of these

'most' also we may say that the little they had was dependent on the will of those who had much.

We are all agreed that there is no possibility of civilized human life without security for each man of food and clothing independently of the will of any other. That is to say, the position of the mediaeval serf on many estates may have been more fortunate than that of the modern agricultural labourer, but he depended for that position on the goodwill of the lord of the manor. Now we are not willing to leave to the vagaries of personal character the distribution of the necessaries of life among most of the inhabitants of a civilized country.

The modern conception therefore is based on the fact that, apart from the social position of any individual and apart from his necessities as a labourer to make him fit for his labour, he must be considered first as a man. So obvious does this seem that we can hardly imagine a time when social caste was strong enough to obscure the fundamental likeness between all members of the same race; and we can hardly believe that even religious men once justified slavery as being good for the slaves, who would be well fed by their owners in order that they might do sufficient work for these owners. Thus we admit that every human being has a right, independently of the interests of any other, to food and clothing; or at least we allow it theoretically: for there may be some who would maintain that those who are without sufficient food and clothing should be left to 'charity'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There appears to be still a conception abroad that poverty or disease is due to personal moral defects, but it is so absurd that I shall not discuss it.

Since, however, very many still are without sufficient food and clothing even for bare human life, the ideal is not realized. We are still moved to act by the conception that as far as possible all human beings should have sufficient for a human life. But if our action be simply charitable or the organizing of charity, it is mediaeval even though we think it well that all the inhabitants of a civilized state should have the bare needs of life. We know indeed that in the Middle Ages distress was often relieved. There was of course abundant charity. The new ideal is implied in that small word 'right'; and although the Church of the Middle Ages preached almsgiving there was never any conception of the *right* of each man to food and clothing. There is a vast difference between giving out of benevolence and supplying a legitimate demand. The Revolution did not ask for charity: it demanded the rights of Man. We agree, I take it, at least in the vaguest sense, that each man has an equal right to the bare necessities of life; and I think the majority of political thinkers would agree that all men are politically equal. If that is so the Revolutionary ideal is still in some sense alive; for, although we have acquired a certain amount of equality, much more has yet to be attained and there are at least some who are working for this equality. I do not attempt to define the equal right of all men; since there may be much disagreement, for instance, as to whether real equality can co-exist with vastly different private incomes, or with inherited wealth, or with certain traditional privileges. But the point is that whatever the precise sense given to political equality by different parties, all accept some form of political

equality as desirable ; and by that we mean, of course, equality of sane adults whom we may call men, not of lunatics, imbeciles, or children.

### Revolutionary Source of the Ideal.

Such is the Revolutionary ideal as it stands to-day. I have now to show its early development. Its value and meaning as well as its deficiencies will appear in the discussion of its growth.

It is a custom among apologists to say that the Christian Church introduced or at least made popular the idea of the equality of man. Nothing could be more glaringly untrue. Official Christianity made no attempt to correct the narrowness of caste prejudice. It accepted first the ranks of the Roman Empire and afterwards the castes of the feudal system ; and it employed itself rather in finding justification for a political situation which already existed than in correcting the deficiencies of the system.<sup>1</sup> But it must be understood that I am not complaining against the mediaeval Church ; for all I know it may have made a mistake in extending the protection of its teaching to political theory. The fact remains that it is to the pagan Renaissance and not to the mediaeval Church that we must look for the source of that ' Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality ' which made the soul of the French Revolution. I do not, of course, deny

<sup>1</sup> Thus Rousseau found it necessary to protest against the use by established government of the New Testament advice to resist not the higher powers (' le précepte est bon, mais superflu '), and of the statement that ' all power is from God ' (' mais toute maladie en vient aussi : est-ce à dire qu'il soit défendu d'appeler le médecin ? '). See *Contrat social*, Book I, ch. iii. Cf. the earlier chapter on ' Cosmopolitan Equality '.

that the Church and the ecclesiastical politicians had stated that all men were brothers whose Father is God. The fundamental difficulty to a real democracy was the addition of the statement that all men were thus 'in the eyes of God'. This made the first statement ineffective, and it was reserved for the anti-ecclesiastical political thinkers of the Enlightenment to show that all men were equal 'in the eyes of men'. What was true only to the mind of God was not true for political purposes; but when it was shown that men could themselves grasp how all men were equal, then a new and splendid ideal was added to the tradition of Western Civilization.

The interests of all men had been considered by theorists long before their rights had been admitted, and even mediaeval political thinkers had not lost sight of a common humanity.

Thomas Aquinas<sup>1</sup> was inclined to suppose that government ultimately rested on *the will* of the governed, and he certainly grasped the truth that it exists for the *good* of the governed.<sup>2</sup> But what was not clear in early times to the official teachers was that the people do not ask for their good to be considered as a sort of charity; it is no special virtue in a prince to consider his subjects. He exists for no other purpose; for such is their *right*.

The conception of right becomes a little clearer in the unorthodox thinkers William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua;<sup>3</sup> but it was politically

<sup>1</sup> In 1270.

<sup>2</sup> *De reg. princ.*; *Summa Th. I. IIae.*

<sup>3</sup> In the *Compendium Errorum*, &c. of Ockham and the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius: both published in Goldast's *Monarchia S. R. Imperii*.

ineffective since it was confused with a theory of the Mediaeval Empire, and it was never widely spread.

As for the expression of the ideal in the days when it was first powerful, some hint of the new conceptions respecting the relation of individuals may be found in Hobbes's *Leviathan*.<sup>1</sup> In this great book the whole structure of society was based upon the conception that individuals unite together for self-preservation. They agree to transfer the power for self-preservation which is in each to a central government, which thus in origin rests upon the will of the people, and exists for the equal benefit of all. Here was a principle which might justify discontent with existing governments, but it could not become a gospel of Revolution, because for Hobbes the government once established was for ever supreme. The transfer of power had been made. Thus we are still in the region of Renaissance sovereignty, and Hobbes is classed with Grotius in the *Contrat social*;<sup>2</sup> but there was present in the work of Hobbes at least a clear conception of the origin and theoretical basis of sovereignty in the will of the governed, which is hardly to be found in Grotius, for whom the alienation of power removes from the people even the theoretical possession of ultimate sovereignty. There was then a beginning in Hobbes of the idea of political equality among the many in whom rested the basis of sovereign rule.

The actual change in the political situation which made it possible for the ideal of equality to flourish on a soil of concrete reality was sudden in some countries and slow in others. In England the

<sup>1</sup> First published in 1651.

<sup>2</sup> *Contrat social*, Book I, ch. ii.

greater number of inhabitants gradually made their power felt from the sixteenth century onwards. Political monopoly of power had been corrected in the Puritan revolution and again in 1688.<sup>1</sup> A gradual approach was thus made towards the equalizing of all adults in law and politics.

But in France the old mediaeval situation was perpetuated until the great Revolution of 1789; and the strength of the *ancien régime* made its opponents all the more violent, so that it is doubtful whether the crimes committed in the name of fraternity should be put down to the Revolution or to the long-established caste-system which made such a revolution possible.

#### The Ideal of Rousseau.

Meantime the change of ideas had begun, and the Gospel of the Revolution was found in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These have been so frequently and so well expounded that it will not be necessary here to do more than show how the fundamental idea of an equal humanity gave them force. The union of men in society as conceived according to the *Contrat social* is a union of equals who do not, as in the *Leviathan*, repudiate their equality by their act of union. Rousseau made a distinction between the government set up by a people and the structure of society, or the relationships of the individuals. The only 'natural' union is, for him, one in which the fundamental equality or brotherhood of all is preserved. 'If the whole structure of

<sup>1</sup> The expression of the ideal involved is in Locke's *Essay on Civil Government*. The great phrase in ch. xiii is, 'there remains in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislature'.



society rests on an act of partnership entered into by equals in behalf of themselves and their descendants for ever, the nature of the union is not what it would be if the members of the union had only entered it to place their liberties at the feet of some superior power. Society in the one case (Hobbes's) is a covenant of subjection, in the other a covenant of social brotherhood.'<sup>1</sup>

But this involves that *every* form of government then existing, in so far as the people were not directly governing, even if they had given over their power willingly and it had not been snatched from them, was corrupt: it was a violation of the natural state and therefore of what was just.<sup>2</sup>

'Man is born free and he is everywhere in chains': these first words of the *Contrat social* are, as it were, the cry of pain from which the Revolutionary enthusiasm arose. It is of interest to notice the fierce antagonism with which Rousseau mentions the name of Grotius as of one who had riveted these chains:<sup>3</sup> his name recurs frequently and Rousseau's violence only shows how completely the Renaissance ideal had become obstructive. The family is the only natural society, all others are conventional. The State is indeed conventional in so far as it is

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. ii, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Rousseau must have been influenced by the non-representative direct voting of the States in the Swiss Confederation; but, as Morley observes, he prefers to quote as an example the Roman comitia, and the Macedonians and Franks.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sa plus constante manière de raisonner est d'établir toujours le droit par le fait' (*Contrat social*, ch. ii), and so to suppose, as Grotius did, that a people gives itself over to absolute obedience is 'supposer un peuple de fous: la folie ne fait pas droit'. *Ibid.* ch. iv.

the result of a free contract or pact, but it is by no means a loss of liberty for the individual. 'Ce que l'homme perd par le contrat social, c'est la liberté naturelle . . . ce qu'il gagne, c'est la liberté civile.'<sup>1</sup> And again: 'au lieu de détruire l'égalité naturelle, le pacte fondamental substitue au contraire une égalité morale et légitime à ce que la nature avait pu mettre d'inégalité physique entre les hommes, et que, pouvant être inégaux en force ou en génie, ils deviennent tous égaux par convention et de droit.'<sup>2</sup> The natural inequality of men is thus recognized by Rousseau and placed in opposition to their political equality. What meaning, then, does he give to the new equality arising in the social pact? 'Le pacte social établit entre les citoyens une telle égalité, qu'ils s'engagent tous sous les mêmes conditions et doivent jouir tous des mêmes droits. Ainsi, par la nature du pacte, tout acte de souveraineté, c'est-à-dire, tout acte authentique de la volonté générale, oblige ou favorise également tous les citoyens.'<sup>3</sup> This is a protest against class-legislation and privilege, and against the tendency of those who are naturally better endowed than others to consider only their own interests.

Such a tendency still exists, and the old excuse for it, that men are born more or less intelligent or powerful, is still sometimes used; but Rousseau is quite reasonable in supposing that its correction can only be made by enforcing the fact of *likeness* between all men in so far as they are members of the State. To form a State, he argues, not only the

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., ch. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Book I, ch. ix, *in fine*.

<sup>3</sup> Book II, ch. iv: 'Des bornes du pouvoir souverain.' The popular will can establish classes, says Rousseau, but not in the interest of the class. Cf. Book II, ch. vi.

intelligent or the competent enter the compact but *all*, both the intelligent and the non-intelligent. As parties to the agreement all are equal though in other ways they are dissimilar; this is the meaning of political equality.<sup>1</sup> How to make this real it is difficult to say;<sup>2</sup> but equality is not a chimera. 'C'est précisément parce que la force des choses tend toujours à détruire l'égalité, que la force de la législation doit toujours tendre à la maintenir.'<sup>3</sup> A government is established by the sovereign people for this purpose;<sup>4</sup> governments are of all kinds, and they tend to abuses<sup>5</sup> while what remains always unchanged is the popular sovereignty. Thus the statement (Book II, chap. i) that 'Sovereignty is inalienable' and is not given up even when a government is established, becomes the theme (Book IV) of the later thesis that direct government by the people is the only safe method. 'Les hommes droits et simples sont difficiles à tromper';<sup>6</sup> kings, priests, and all governors are

<sup>1</sup> 'J'appelle donc république tout État régi par les lois, sous quelque forme d'administration que ce puisse être: car alors seulement l'intérêt public gouverne, et la chose publique est quelque chose. Tout gouvernement légitime est républicain'—in the sense explained later. Book II, ch. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Whether by redistribution of wealth or by 'moderation of avarice'. Cf. Book II, ch. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Book II, ch. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Book III, ch. i. Government is intermediate between the sovereign and the subject.

<sup>5</sup> Book III, ch. x. Thus Rousseau goes farther in understanding Aristotle than Grotius did.

<sup>6</sup> Book IV, ch. i. Rousseau says the people of Berne or Geneva would never have submitted to a Cromwell or a Duke of Beaufort. Thus he definitely refers to the Swiss method, and I do not see why Morley says he gives examples only from Macedon and Rome.

to be suspected, for their very abilities lead them to power and their power to the maintenance of a situation no longer willed by the governed.

Rousseau, however, was not isolated in the expression of this right of revolution; although perhaps he saw or felt more clearly than others what practical consequences were involved in the theory of popular sovereignty. The theorists of the eighteenth century supposed the existence of a Law of Nature by which, as Blackstone has it, men have 'natural rights such as life and liberty, which no human legislature has power to abridge or destroy'; but here was a principle of revolution in the guise of a basis for established law, since any man might assert that the existing human legislature violated his rights according to the Law of Nature. And this Law of Nature, being unknown to every one, could be quoted by any one. It was agreed on all sides that it involved certain rights existing in man as man and irrespective of social rank or inherited privilege.

Nature was an excellent ground for destroying the governments which existed;<sup>1</sup> but in practice the direct sovereignty of a fraternal and equal people was not established even by the Revolutionaries who were inspired by Rousseau. Direct popular government is only possible in small groups; but the Revolution had inherited the whole of monarchical France as a unit to be governed. Hence an indirect government of the people had to be set

<sup>1</sup> Contrast with de Groot's adoration of the established Rousseau's phrase: 'La loi d'hier n'oblige pas aujourd'hui: mais le consentement tacite est présumé du silence, et le souverain est censé confirmer incessamment les lois qu'il n'abroge pas, *pouvant le faire,*' Book III, ch. xi.

up; and the various committees and councils of Paris adopted the old methods of centralized authority. Hence also the same principle of revolution which had destroyed the monarchy destroyed any government which the Revolution could create; for the 'true believers' in the Rousseau gospel could always protest that any existing government was a tyranny when the whole people did not vote on every issue.

Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among men* contains the same general theme.<sup>1</sup> It admits natural inequality and deplors the political inequality erroneously founded upon it. Rousseau clearly expresses the prevailing difficulties and puts them all down to inequality. Even the natural inequality is misrepresented, he says, in a state of things in which 'a child is king over an old man, an imbecile leads a wise man, and a few are gorged with superfluities while the hungry majority lack what is barely necessary'.<sup>2</sup>

It is only too easy to point out the mistakes as to fact and the erroneous political judgements of Rousseau. What is not easy but is more important is to see how clearly he expressed the general distress and the accepted idea of what would remove it. If we could suppose all men equal, the Revolutionaries might have said, we should at least discover by competition with equal opportunities who were the best.<sup>3</sup> Thus by political equality in place of the prevailing inequality we might arrive at natural inequality and also at the fundamental likeness between all men irrespective of their

<sup>1</sup> It was published eight years before the *Contrat social*.

<sup>2</sup> The last words of the *Discourse*.

<sup>3</sup> The words are from D. Ritchie.

special abilities. But this political equality of right was to be secured by direct popular government.

The political conceptions of Rousseau were confused and unpractical ; but the ideal which moved him was shared by very many, and it survived even the ludicrous consequences of the first attempts to apply it. For, after all, the repudiation of representative government was only a means suggested by which to arrive at the end of giving all men equal political rights ; and although Rousseau thought it was a necessary means, we may perhaps suppose that there are others.<sup>1</sup> And if it is really possible for all men to have equal political rights in groups which are too large for direct voting on all issues to be practical, then we may value the ideal of the Revolution independently of our judgement of its political programme. That ideal as it appears in Rousseau is the production and development of individuals who may have the freest possible play for all their faculties. It involves that no human being is to be sacrificed to the development of any other ; all are equal, all brethren, and all are free. The still more fundamental conception, which is perfectly valid, is that man is essentially 'good' ; and this transformation of the fundamental basis of equality was wrought by the French thinkers almost in spite of their English teachers, Locke and Hobbes. For with Hobbes especially the fundamental prejudice, inherited from Puritanism, is that human nature tends to evil. Social organization is the result of man's tendency to *conflict* ; and govern-

<sup>1</sup> There is of course the continual tendency to complain against any system of representative government. The Referendum is merely a modified form of the Rousseau conception of the inalienable sovereignty of the people.

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ment improves man. Rousseau on the contrary held that government degrades man; for man is essentially free and independent. How then did society arise if it was an evil? It arose as the less of two evils. 'The state of nature' was being destroyed by the inevitable growth of natural forces (crowding, &c.) and to save themselves men conventionally agreed to unite. Thus the less government the better, for thus we are nearer to the free life of the naturally virtuous man. Such conceptions, it is clear, have their modern results in Anarchism or in Socialism according as government is conceived as a bad convention or as a natural result of human nature. But of these issues we shall speak later. The important point for our present argument is the immense faith in the original purity of man's nature which was possessed by all the great Revolutionaries.

#### The embodiment of the Ideal in events.

The facts as to the Revolution are sufficiently well known, but it is perhaps necessary to point out why I have spoken of Rousseau's expression of the ideal before even stating the events in which that ideal may be seen to have been an influence. It is not altogether true that the philosophers made the Revolution; but it is true that by contrast with the history of other ideals the ideal of the Revolution, at least in France, preceded in statement the attempt at realization of it in fact.<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that the want from which the ideal arose was not felt long before Rousseau or

<sup>1</sup> Thus Locke's Treatise is an excuse for established fact; but the Revolutionary 'excuse' was stated by Rousseau *before* the fact of its partial realization.

other Revolutionary thinkers expressed it. The Revolution was not the result of a political theory but of definite distress.

The evils seen by Arthur Young are well known : 'the people almost as wild as their country, and their town of Combourg one of the most brutal filthy places that can be seen ; mud houses, no windows, and a pavement so broken as to impede all passengers, but ease none,—yet here is a chateau, and inhabited ; who is this Mons. de Chateaubriand, the owner, that has nerves strung for a residence amid such filth and poverty ?'<sup>1</sup> A Chateaubriand when young inhabited that place and later praised the old régime. And again, 'one third of what I have seen of this province seems uncultivated and nearly all of it is in misery. What have kings, and ministers, and parliaments and states to answer for their prejudices, seeing millions of hands that would be industrious, idle and starving, through the execrable maxims of despotism, or the equally detestable prejudices of a feudal nobility.'<sup>2</sup> The dumb rage of the peasantry led to the Jacquerie ; but even in that brutal action one may see the want out of which an ideal arises.

We may read the list of grievances in the account of all that was abolished in 1789. 'L'Assemblée nationale détruit entièrement le régime féodal. . . . Le droit exclusif des fuies et colombiers est aboli. . . . Le droit exclusif de la chasse et des garennes ouvertes est aboli. . . . Toutes les justices seigneuriales sont supprimées sans aucune indemnité. . . . Tous les citoyens pourront être admis à tous les

<sup>1</sup> *Travels*, September 1, 1788.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, September 5, 1788.



emplois et dignités. . . .'<sup>1</sup> This and much more of the same kind exists as proof of the nature of the want felt. It was economic but also political. Financial distress and brutalizing poverty were combined with obsolete administration and privileges which turned all the energies of the community awry. Vaguely and for the greater number unconsciously, a conception was moving men to action, a dream that all might be well if privilege was destroyed. There was hope in a king who would deliver his people; but the deliverance was delayed until patience was exhausted.

The mass of men are not interested in their rights until they suffer physically and mentally. But all the force of established government went to maintain this mass of suffering, until the dams were broken and the flood overwhelmed the whole obsolete system. Paris rose in insurrection, the Bastille was taken, and popular assemblies voted complete reform.<sup>2</sup> Then the forces of Revolution began to divide among themselves. Such an immense tradition of obsolete abuses naturally gave rise to innumerable plans of reform; and fear, which makes states as well as gods, began to force extreme measures upon those who would have anything rather than a return to the old evil. The sovereigns who had been established by the Renaissance allied themselves against the new France (1791); and the people of the Revolution replied by raising armies and at last, impelled by fear of civil warfare, by the execution of Louis XVI (1793).

The whole effort was to realize equality of

<sup>1</sup> *Courrier de Provence*, August 8-10, 1789. Quoted in Legg, *Select Documents of the French Rev.*, i. 106.

<sup>2</sup> The bare right to vote was esteemed a great gain.

political rights among all the inhabitants of France, and this equality was to be extended by the destruction of privilege and caste in every country. But the established government having been destroyed, different groups grasped at the supreme power. Paris was in the throes of extreme party controversy and all France was in confusion, while the armies of the Revolution passed the frontiers (1793, 1794).

It was clear practically, though not yet in theory, that without any settled government caste and privilege might be destroyed but no one would be any the better. Confusion and a strong army led to the Directorate (1795) : that gave Bonaparte prominence, and the result was the transformation of the First Consul into the Emperor (1804). Thus the gospel of equal political rights led to a sort of military despotism. It had, however, achieved something for the bourgeoisie and it remained as an inspiration for the movement of 1848.

#### Limits of the Ideal.

But perhaps it is as well to state that the equality at which the Revolution aimed was not a futile and abstract equality of worth among all men. We must not imagine that the Revolution failed to make that real, for that it never attempted to establish. The ideal of the Revolution does not imply that all men have good brains any more than that all men have long legs. Only the rhetorical fool can imagine that he gains a victory over those old enthusiasts by showing—what is perfectly obvious—that men are not equal in ability, in birth, or in moral character. No one ever said they were, and perhaps it might have been less misleading if

the Revolutionary theory had asserted, not that all men are equal, but that they are all similar. That would have sounded like a platitude, but it would not therefore have been a useless observation ; for the fact is that the Revolution was protesting against the continual forgetfulness of precisely that platitude. Political thinkers, statesmen, and lawyers had really forgotten that, underlying the distinctions there was a fundamental likeness in all men. The distinctions were given a prominence which quite obscured the similarity ; so that in practice the humanity of human beings was disregarded. Some men were treated as beasts and others as gods. The Revolution aimed first at establishing that all were men. It may be said that this is a fantastic exaggeration of the grievance against which the Revolutionaries were protesting. It may be held impossible to believe that thinking men ever forgot the common humanity of all men. It may not be possible to realize that our conception of equality was not always current. But if there is any difficulty, we need only think of the same sort of pre-Revolutionary conceptions which are in vogue to-day with respect to women.

In spite of Plato, in defiance of history, on a plea of reference to 'facts', it is actually possible for many to-day even in civilized countries to consider that sexual differences render insignificant or negligible the common humanity of man and woman.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed said that women because of their sex are not competent to think or act in political issues. It is urged in pseudo-scientific terminology that the bodily structure of the female

<sup>1</sup> The pamphlet of Miss Jane Harrison, *Homo Sum*, is an admirable continuance of Revolutionary literature.

makes it impossible for her to enter into business or politics. Not many years ago the same sort of argument was used to show that their bodily structure made women incompetent in mathematics, science, philosophy, or the higher branches of art. But this reference to differences, involving a repudiation of fundamental likeness, is precisely the attitude of the *ancien régime*. Exactly the same was said of the differences in birth, wealth, education or genius, all which showed that whole classes of men were incompetent in political issues and that their interests would best be considered by others.

The arguments drawn from differences once supported caste and privilege as they now support the exclusion of women from politics.

Such antiquated and obsolete opinions I shall not trouble to refute. It will be sufficient to observe that if such arguments hold we must believe that a woman is more like a cow than like a man. Sex must be more important than race; and the fact that the convolutions of the brain in the human female are not unlike those in the male must be neglected as insignificant because women, like female cats, dogs or other mammals, are able to bear young.

My point is that if many still do not recognize in politics the common humanity of man and woman, we can easily imagine how many in the eighteenth century did not recognize the common humanity even among male human beings. It was therefore no platitude but a paradox at that time to say that the labourer and the shopkeeper should have equal political rights with the landowner and the courtier.

### Criticism of the Ideal.

We must now turn to criticism. The Revolutionary ideal even in its best form implied certain mistakes as to fact and certain other mistakes in the ethical judgement of value. Quite apart therefore from its exaggerations, from its futile embodiment in the First Republic and its utter failure in the Empire, it must be shown to be somewhat limited.

The mistakes in the expression of the Revolutionary ideal are only too obvious. We can always see the limitations of those who immediately preceded us more easily than of the ancients; and a modern revolt always tends to give birth to romantic enthusiasm for the evils against which the revolt was directed. The evil of the successful revolt, which promised so much and achieved so little, appears monstrous; and the good it destroyed in its war against abuses is exaggerated. Thus the absurdities of Chateaubriand and Joseph de Maistre have their place in the record of disappointment which marks the development of political ideals. Death masks the scowl of a tyrant's face; the *ancien régime* once dead seemed kindly and serene beside the scarred and struggling features of the new Republic. Even in England men of the nineteenth century began to believe in a golden Middle Age when all landowners were benevolent, all villeins happy, when all the knights were gallant and all the ladies beautiful. Thus I take it as a sign of deficiency in the Revolutionary ideal that Romanticism and Mediaevalism followed hard upon it. Something was obviously felt to have been omitted in the new conceptions of the relation of individuals and something valuable was

believed to have been destroyed. I do not say, of course, that the romantic ideal showed any better ethical judgement or implied any better knowledge of historical facts than did the Revolution, but clearly the kingships and empires of the later nineteenth century and the sentimental literature of the same date had some reasonable ground for opposition to the revolutionary ideal.

Romanticism had its effect on political thought,<sup>1</sup> but since it was praise of a golden age which had obviously never existed it did not provide any new political ideal. All its real strength lay in its criticism of the exaggerations of the Revolution. Granting therefore that there is something to be said against even the best form of the Revolutionary ideal, we must now proceed to say in what points it seems to be most deficient.

First, the conception of the individual was misleading. The talk of 'rights' as belonging to 'man' implied a neglect of the fact that the state system is a *natural growth*.<sup>2</sup> It was even said that the organization of society was an artificial and almost arbitrary means for preserving the natural rights of man. Thus 'man' isolated was regarded as natural and society was thought artificial or conventional. The Revolutionaries often opposed the national sentiment they should have supported even according to their own principles, because they dreamed of an abstract cosmopolitanism and neglected the fundamental distinctions of race or of

<sup>1</sup> In the opposition to Republicanism and the return to military conceptions of Society.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed philosophical criticism see Bosanquet's *Phil. Theory of the State*. I do not, however, go so far as he does in attempting to make society a real unit.

grouping. Napoleon used the national forces of the new France on the plea at first of dethroning tyrants and freeing peoples, but eventually only to subordinate all other peoples to French methods and French despots. It is not fair perhaps to put down to the Revolution the military despotism of Napoleon, but it is perfectly clear that the leaders of the Revolution thought too much of 'man' and too little of the distinctions between Frenchmen and Italians, Germans or Englishmen. For even though there is a fundamental likeness between all men which was emphasized in order to destroy caste and privilege, the exaggeration of the gospel of equality weakened it. To admit likenesses ought not to involve the denial of differences; and the distinctions between races were much more important than those between social classes in France itself. The whole error arose from the conception of society as a convention; for that involved the conception of a perfect or ideal man who was not bound by inheritance or social relations, whereas in fact society is 'natural' and no individual is isolated.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the non-rational elements in all human thought and action were neglected. The theorists of the Revolution, with the prejudices of the Enlightenment, exaggerated the importance of pure reasoning or of consciousness in action. They did not see that half the actions of every individual have emotional causes and all have emotional

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that though I say the individual is never isolated or 'atomic', I am not willing to say that the individual is unreal or even deficient in reality. Society or the State is simply a reality of a different kind, not of any more worth than the individual.

effects, that actions are governed largely by the laws of imitation, and that all our acts depend upon and affect the artistic or religious atmosphere. Hence it was that the Romanticists could protest against the limited interests of the Revolution and point to the art or emotional atmosphere of the old régime as something good which had been lost.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion.

The Revolutionary ideal therefore had its deficiencies. It failed to be realized and it disappointed its admirers even when half realized, not only because men were unprepared for its splendid elements but also because it had real weaknesses. And now it has shuffled off its original form and appears as the mildest of monsters. It involves so little that is purely destructive now, and it has been so corrected in its individualism and intellectualism that almost any political party may admit the equal political rights of all sane adults. It is almost on the point of being taken for granted.

Still, however, in 'One man, one vote', in 'Adult suffrage for both sexes', the old voice of the Revolution survives and moves civilized men; and in so far as these are not attained, revolutionary conceptions are still ideals. But these cries are for a few. The vast majority of those interested in politics are not touched by them. And yet even that majority is still moved by an ideal which we may call revolutionary in so far as there is a con-

<sup>1</sup> It may seem wrong to accuse of intellectualism an ideal so influenced by Rousseau the emotionalist; but it seems true that the admiration for constitution-making, &c., and the decrying of taste as luxury are signs of the old eighteenth century surviving even in Rousseau.



tinual tendency to give the franchise more generally or to redistribute votes so that representation shall be more equal.<sup>1</sup> This is the result of the Revolution, and it remains not only as a sign of what we hold valuable among our acquired possessions, but also as a sign of what we still think worth achieving. In some sense equality of political rights is thought to be desirable ; and we cannot be supposed to be already in possession of it. Caste and privilege still remain in many countries, and even in England and the United States we may believe that they exist under other names.

<sup>1</sup> Thus I take as a result of the Revolution the idea that 30,000 votes of a city-borough should not be represented by one man while one man may also represent only 1,000 votes in a country constituency. Equality of voting power is the modern form of the ideal of equal political rights.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MODERN NATIONALISM

#### **Preliminary Considerations.**

WE must now consider an ideal of comparatively recent growth which concerns the relation of the different groups into which humanity is divided. Out of Renaissance Sovereignty combined with Revolutionary Rights comes Nationalism. The local independence of the sovereign State was at last connected with the right of the inhabitants to choose their own form of government ; and the result has been the conception that every group of sufficient permanence and with enough of a distinct tradition to have a 'national' character should have an opportunity for developing its own forms of law and government.

I need hardly say that I am not supposing that national characters are fixed ; for my present purpose it is sufficient if the members of any one group have habits of mind or customs which are different from those of any other. A statement of the present facts does not necessarily involve a prophecy of the future. The tendency of modern world-politics and world-commerce is towards assimilating distant peoples, and it has already produced a sort of international caste in the nations of Europe. But at present there are distinct groups of men which are not to be distinguished as States nor as cities. These groups we

shall call nations, although the word is inexact and has had many other meanings.<sup>1</sup>

National differences may be supposed to be due to (1) heredity and (2) environment.<sup>2</sup> As to the former—'Century after century our departed ancestors have fashioned our ideas and sentiments.'<sup>3</sup> In the list we might make of all human beings, the dead far outnumber the living; and the effects of their thought and action are much more important politically than the thought and action of all the living put together. I mean, of course, that these effects of the past constitute the majority of political facts.

The existence of national characteristics in features, habits of mind or body, language and even dress, is an instance of the past living in the present. We are grouped as we are because of what happened to our forefathers; and the ideal of a 'Parliament of Man, a Federation of the World' is far off because of the forces which separated humanity in earlier times. If man had no history then we

<sup>1</sup> Mill's definition is bad; *Rep. Govt.*, ch. xvi. What he says would be in part equally true of almost any group (City, Trade Union, &c.), and in part is a definition not of a fact but of an ideal. 'A portion of mankind', says Mill, 'may be said to constitute a Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others—which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves inclusively.'

<sup>2</sup> Mill puts down as causes: (1) Identity of descent; (2) community of language and religion; (3) geographical limits; (4) identity of political antecedents. *Loc. cit.*, ch. xvi. These are included in the list I give.

<sup>3</sup> Le Bon, *Psychology of Peoples*.

could begin without difficulty to arrange the world upon the best plans conceivable ; for then all men would be made according to one excellent definition, all turned out according to one pattern and each easily to be understood by studying the other. But each of us individually and each group of us collectively is a result of the past : we are burdened or we are benefited by our descent.

And with respect to environment we may speak of natural and human surroundings. Natural surroundings, climate, and the resources of the country soon make considerable differences in any settled state of society, although their influence has been somewhat exaggerated by such writers as Buckle. I am not now implying any doctrine as to 'racial characteristics' ; for I am inclined to believe that no characteristic can be supposed to be permanent in any nation. Not even if Buckle was right and the character of human inhabitants is completely moulded by geographical and climatic conditions—not even so is it possible to speak as though any special virtue were the special possession of any one race of men.<sup>1</sup> For, as against the limitation in Buckle's view, different races at different times have inhabited the same place and one race has developed and the other has not ; and again, the same race in the same geographical surroundings

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Buckle, *Civilization* ; cf. i. 43 : 'Hence arises a national character more fitful and capricious, &c.' It will be clearly seen that, although I do not deny a partial truth in Buckle's concept of development, the whole thesis of this essay implies that he neglected one of the most prominent motive powers even in early history. I have not troubled to show that the want from which the ideal arises cannot come *only* from the geographical conditions.

has had different characteristics at different times.<sup>1</sup> But in spite of the fallacies of the geographical hypothesis, to call it by a short name; and in spite of the exaggerations of all who speak of racial character, it remains true that, as at present situated and in their present development, one nation differs from another. As one family differs in blood from another, and as the group we call a nation is a more or less permanent association of families, we may suppose that one nation differs from another in blood. The amount of this physical difference will vary with immigration, commercial contact, and travel; but any nation which has been permanent for some centuries will differ from any other partly because of the effects of natural environment.

Next, by human surroundings I mean the intellectual or emotional effect of man on man or family on family. I take it that no one can consider political issues with reference to individuals and without any reference to the change all individuals undergo through living in groups. This again has been somewhat exaggerated by such writers as le Bon and there is a tendency to mythology in the use of such terms as the Crowd Mind or the Soul of a People, although as poetry they are effective. The best treatment of the social environment seems to me to be McDougall's; and in his work the

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking (1) of ancient and modern 'Greeks' and (2) of English character as 'merry' in the Middle Ages and as 'shopkeeping' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is clear that it is impossible to prove that Western Civilization is 'higher' than Eastern because 'the powers of nature' are not so great in Europe as elsewhere (Buckle, vol. i, ch. iii).

individual still remains real, although the group is recognized as a fact to be reckoned with.<sup>1</sup> 'National characteristics', he says, 'are in the main [not innate, but] the expressions of different traditions.' Imitation is said to be in one sense the conservative force, and, in so far as the few are often original, imitation of them is an agent of progress.<sup>2</sup> 'The life of societies is not merely the scene of the activities of individuals':<sup>3</sup> and so we arrive at the group with a distinct character of its own.

Besides mere physical relationship we have to reckon with the unity of a tradition. Those who live in continuous contact develop and sometimes even produce a special conception of what is admirable in character or valuable in life, or of the place which law and government should have. Such conceptions are embodied in institutions supported by custom and expressed in literature and the other arts. 'Ce qui fait que les hommes forment un peuple, c'est le souvenir des grandes choses qu'ils ont faites ensemble et la volonté d'en accomplir des nouvelles.'<sup>4</sup> A common memory and a common ideal—these, more than a common blood—make a nation.

These, then, are the forces which make what we now call a nation; from them we may judge the

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*: especially Section II, ch. x, 'The operation of the Primary Tendencies of the Human Mind, in the Life of Societies'. Cf. p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 351.

<sup>4</sup> E. Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Conf. faite en Sorbonne 11 mars 1882.

<sup>5</sup> Thus we may speak of the Belgian nation (in spite of differences within it of blood and language) because they have risked the same adventures and have a common intention as a separate group.

nature of the group and its value as a power in political development. The result of history has been the formation of many such groups, implying distinctions and differences which no sane political thinker can refuse to recognize. They are present as a sentiment or a vague emotion in the minds of many who are by no means consciously Nationalists; and this sentiment inevitably supports the conscious ideal that these differences should be maintained and developed.

#### The Ideal. Its present meaning.

We must now attempt to show on what ground the conscious Nationalist of modern times would promote and develop the divergent traditions of different nations. Beginning with the bare fact that groups of men do differ, what benefit can be supposed to flow from the difference? In the first place, as the destruction of individuality may destroy genius, so the attempt to make all groups of men exactly alike in their customs or creeds may destroy some special character of endurance or wit which may be developed even in a small nation. There is some special quality in every group which it would be well for the sake of the whole of humanity to preserve. But this can only be preserved if the group has an opportunity for characteristic development of its own laws and institutions. The evidence of the past shows that when a race is deprived of its own political life its work is less valuable, and that when a race wins political independence its art and science contribute to the general progress of civilization.

The existence of many small independent states has resulted in the past in the art of Athens or

Florence, the philosophy and science of Greek cities, and the International Law which arose among the Dutch. The Nationalist would therefore argue that each group with a civilized tradition has a right to independent development in view of what it may produce for humanity at large. The guiding conception is not a mere sentimental admiration for small states or for weakness; just as not sentimentalism but pure reason directs that we should not eliminate the individual weakling in case he may be able to do more for the race than the most healthy barbarian. So reason demands that we should expect from a small state results at least as valuable as any which may come from immense and wealthy empires.

In practical politics, therefore, we should allow every distinct national group to be a completely independent state. For, in the second place, no one method for organizing the relation of individuals is correct universally. States should vary in their methods of law and government, reflecting in their variety the distinctions of human groups. Besides independence, therefore, a characteristic development should be supported, and the tendency to assimilate due to the increasing ease of communication should be corrected.

Thirdly, the ideal would not imply the absolute segregation of each group, for indeed a group, like an individual, cannot develop in complete isolation. Nationalism would imply close relationship between different groups; but not for the elimination of differences. That close relationship (alliance or federation) would be for the more civilized development of those very differences. Men are not necessarily made like one another by being friends, for



if it is an intelligent friendship it promotes rather than hinders individuality. Indeed, there is more assimilation by direct hostility than there is by friendship; one imitates the foe for the purpose of overcoming him. Savages are more like one another than are civilized men. Thus I see nothing in the ideal of Nationalism which is necessarily opposed to the ideal of Imperialism. In practice they are opposed because each is inadequately conceived; but if Nationalism can imply a close relationship (even in the same state system) of many races, so Imperialism can imply the recognition (within the same state) of many different interests.

#### Historical Origin of the Ideal.

Nationalism, however, must be understood by reference to its origin. We must go back to a time when geographical divisions separated men more effectively than they do now; when a mountain-chain was not tunnelled, a river not bridged; when railways and ocean liners did not change the very meaning of space. Then people living on different sides of a mountain-chain, a river, or sea, saw so little of one another that in a few generations their languages were mutually unintelligible and by intermarriage or contact with different environments their physical features began to differ.

I must not be understood to suppose that there ever was a homogeneous human race which was then diversified by separation. The two tendencies have been at work simultaneously—that of co-ordination or assimilation and that of separation or diversification; and I am only taking apart into its two elements a movement which is really one.

The progress of humanity is to be understood as a resultant of these two almost opposing forces. The moving of tribes tends to intermarriage and assimilation, but as soon as any tribe becomes agricultural diversification begins. In Western Civilization the natural diversity of races was counteracted by the Roman Empire; and when that great force for assimilation was destroyed, its ghost lingered on during the Middle Ages, so that in spite of differences in race the various peoples of Europe still felt themselves one in religious and political issues. Races had not yet become nations.

The appearance of national character can be dated almost exactly. It occurred at the Renaissance. The old Roman world had gone to pieces a thousand years before; but Western Civilization still depended for such unity as it possessed in the fifteenth century upon the roads, the official language and the basal law of the Romans. Meantime, when the period of migration had passed and people stayed for some generations in the same place, the geographical features of Europe made themselves felt. The roads went from bad to worse, travel was less and less easy, and different climates or soils modified the law and the language. Out of the confused unity of the Middle Ages came the definite separations of the Renaissance, and men began first to feel what we now call their nationality.

First came the observed fact of difference, and then the ideal of Nationalism was conceived. The old historians used to write as though the ideals of the Renaissance, independent states and the self-development of the individual, had come

first, and then had come the Renaissance state and the Renaissance prince. But clearly events occurred in the reverse order. Nations were independent before philosophers and politicians said that they should be so; individuals had freed themselves from mediaevalism before artists and poets claimed self-development as a right. I do not mean that men already had what they aimed at; but what they had gave them the first hint of the advantage of having more of the same kind. As yet, however, the ideal was embryonic. We may imagine it as the unborn child of the ideal of Renaissance sovereignty; for governmental independence came before any clearly conceived Nationalism. Accepting the fact of difference it was now possible for nations to work out their own futures. Not even in theory was it any longer the business of an emperor or a pope to see to the development of England or of France.<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance, however, divided Europe rather into a collection of states than into nations. The ideal of the time was governmental independence, not group-development. And it was not until the Revolution had come and gone that the long slumbering national consciousness came to birth as a new ideal.<sup>2</sup>

What sort of ideal was then conceived? First;

<sup>1</sup> But we must observe also that while the mediaeval theory of unity was in vogue there were really no nations. Geographical division had not yet fully developed the distinctions between the groups of men who settled in different parts after the great migrations, and if there were local interests these were hardly recognized by political thinkers.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Morley, *History and Politics*, p. 71: 'National sentiment changed to Political idea.'

Nationalism meant the independent development of each distinct group. Racial dialect had become a literary and official language; differences of custom had become fixed in distinct systems of law and government; and all this was no longer thought of in terms of organization as it had been during the Renaissance. The new Nationalism was based upon the common character of distinct groups of people. The people became the centre of interest; they and not the government were the nation.

Again, the differences of race had produced differences of religious ritual and belief. For a hundred years before Luther came the Northern nations had been restless under the mediaeval ecclesiastical system. But the Church had been a real power, whereas the Empire had not; and so political preceded religious independence. At last, however, the differences of sentiment had proved too strong even for religious tradition, and Northern races had begun their experiments in national religion. The Age of monarchs passed and the popular gospel of Revolution followed; but the work of the Renaissance and Reformation in dividing the religious tradition was not undone, and Nationalism found ready to its hand characteristic creeds in different groups.

Through the centuries that followed the Renaissance, and until the Napoleonic era, Nationalism was rather a sentiment than a programme, but the sentiment was strong. It was felt as a real political fact at the partition of Poland (1772). It gave force to the Spanish resistance against French government from 1806 until 1813. It produced the defeat of Napoleon at Moscow and the revival

of Germany;<sup>1</sup> and although it was disregarded by the statesmen of the Congress of Vienna,<sup>2</sup> it continued to grow until at last it became a definite political ideal in about 1848. Thus, as Lord Morley puts it, Nationalism 'from instinct became idea; from idea, abstract principle; then fervid prepossession; ending where it is to-day, in dogma, whether accepted or evaded'.<sup>3</sup>

### Recent Activity of the Ideal.

In this last form, therefore, it must be further described; for, whether we oppose or not, it is one of the greatest forces in modern politics.

Nationalism was in the first place revolutionary, because Europe still bore traces of the crude dynastic divisions of the Renaissance. In some cases one nation forced its own institutions upon another, as Austria upon the Italians. 'Europe bled white by the man who was to have been her saviour was again prisoner to kings whom she no longer revered.'<sup>4</sup> The association known by the name of 'Young Italy' was founded on 'the three inseparable bases of Independence, Unity, and Liberty—that is, the Austrians must go, the various small States must be united in one, and democratic government with liberty of opinion must be established'.<sup>5</sup> But first 'Austria must go'; and so in every country Nationalism implied a shaking of

<sup>1</sup> Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* represent the change from sentiment to programme.

<sup>2</sup> 'They defied the very force which had re-established the old despotism.' Morley, *History and Politics*.

<sup>3</sup> *History and Politics*, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Trevelyan, *Garibaldi's Defence*, &c., p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16. The quotation is from Mazzini's *Manifesto of Young Italy*, issued in 1831.

established governments, which were sometimes, as in Italy, alien to the people governed, sometimes, as in Germany, an inheritance from obsolete politics.

But Nationalism was also constructive. It implied that each national group should and could develop its own institutions and manage its own affairs. Thus it was at once an assault on any governmental oppression and a plan for reorganization. The group was to choose, establish, and maintain its own form of law and government. The general principles of all such law or government were drawn from what had been proved in the Revolution; and, speaking vaguely, Nationalism was democratic in all countries: but it implied also that particular application of these general principles should be made by each group for itself.

Nationalism also implied that divisions of the same national group should be removed. A nation with a united consciousness and the same tradition should not be divided into a number of separate states. Thus the Italian Kingdom and the German Empire were formed through the conception that peoples of the same speech or like customs should have the same state-system. It is true that there were distinctions between the parts of Italy and the parts of Germany which Cavour and Bismarck found it difficult to remove; but the appeal to national sentiment against what was so obviously different as Austria in Italy or France in opposition to the Germans proved effective. Sometimes the democratic doctrines of Nationalism made it difficult for the upper classes to feel the national sentiment;<sup>1</sup> just as, in Bismarck's policy, the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi's Defence*, &c., p. 104. Of the Republicans among the Nationalists: 'At worst the

prominence of war made the new revolutionaries doubtful of the value of German unity. But in spite of the differences of political programme in which it was embodied, Nationalism progressed by the appeal to common sentiments among peoples who had been divided by arbitrary governments.

In Germany, for example, the very popular sentiment which had made it possible for incompetent princelings to defeat in the end the great Napoleon, as soon as this defeat was secured, was suspected and opposed by statesmen. The German race was awake and desired union,<sup>1</sup> but the mutual jealousy of kings and dukes kept back that unity, until at last Prussia found it convenient to use the aspirations of the people for securing her own pre-dominance. Nationalism secured its purpose, but the price it paid was the sacrifice of its liberal and popular elements. It is nonsense to speak of Bismarck as the 'maker' of Germany: he was, in fact, a tool in the hands of the force he seemed to be using, and because the tool was blunt German Nationalism was unable to attain its full development.<sup>2</sup> But it did at any rate destroy the obsolete system of petty independent states.

Republic stood for Italy, and where one man was a zealous Republican, ten were good Italians.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The students of Germany were only voicing a common sentiment in the movement which made *Burschenschaften* and *Turnvereine* powerful; but statesmen did all they could to repress Teutonic ambitions which later they took credit for creating. The famous Karlsbad decrees (1819) showed how much the princes cared for Nationalism.

<sup>2</sup> In exactly the same way Napoleon I used French Nationalism, but one may also say that Napoleon was the dangerous tool used by France. The tool runs away with the hand which uses it, and Nationalism becomes the support of military domination.

Thus also Greece rose again to consciousness of a new destiny and the foreign oppression was cast off. Language and blood had greatly changed since the great days of Greece, but the memory of great deeds was enough to waken even alien poets to enthusiasm for giving the Greek race its own political institutions. And we have seen in recent years what constructive power this nationalist ideal may have besides being a force for removing oppression or obsolete governmental systems. For apart from defeat by Turkey in 1897 and success in war since, the real success of Greece has been in establishing a civilized and economically important influence in Southern Europe.

In the confusion of politics in the Balkans, also, we may reasonably suppose that Nationalism was at work. There, too, the consciousness of race was leading to a new organization of distinct groups. The Treaty of Berlin (in 1878) recognized as conscious nations Roumania and Servia. But stranger still, the Bulgarians, at first with Russian support and later in defiance of Russia herself, 'developed a strong civic and patriotic instinct',<sup>1</sup> showing that, in spite of Slav language and almost Magyar blood, a 'peasant state' can possess and develop a tradition and a character of its own.

The meaning of these events is to be understood by reference to a political need and to the ideal as a motive force in supplying that need. The evils out of which Nationalism arises are dynastic

<sup>1</sup> Rose, *Devel. of the European Nations*, p. 258 (ed. 1914); ch. x, 'The Making of Bulgaria,' is practically a study of the growth of the Nationalist ideal. The recent fate of Bulgaria since the last Balkan war has only accentuated the 'national' character.



and obsolete governmental systems, causing the majority to feel that their interest or their character is not represented by the administration under which they live. Foreigners in possession give the most tangible form to the evil ; but Nationalism is also essentially democratic in theory, and therefore it may be corrective of methods adopted by the few even of one's own race. In most cases, however, the few have contrived to pose as representatives of the national character, so that Nationalism in fact has not often been liberal.

The good perceived, which Nationalism seeks to increase, is the distinction of national character and the development of national traditions. Thus a new principle of constructive policy is established which has been given official recognition in the recent statements of the English attitude towards Belgium.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Ideal Literature.

The literature of Nationalism is not extensive, since we can hardly count as literature the pamphlets and chance references to national tradition and character which have so often appeared. The first clear conception of national character and the part it may play is to be found in Vico ; and since the last great prophet of Nationalism was Mazzini, we may perhaps count this ideal as a contribution made by Italy to the political tradition. Italy has indeed suffered more than any other land from foreigners,<sup>2</sup> and perhaps it was the extremity of the evil there which produced the finest form of the ideal.

<sup>1</sup> That is, it is accepted as an ideal that apart from treaty a people conscious of one tradition should have what government it chooses. Cf. Mr. Asquith's speeches, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> The expression of the evil is well known. It is not anywhere, I think, more beautifully expressed than in

In Fichte's *Addresses* there is a clear consciousness of national character as playing a part in history. And in Görres' *Germany and the Revolution* Nationalism is seen in its democratic form.<sup>1</sup> In Mill's *Representative Government* national character is given a place; and in Renan's *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* the popular appeal is combined with a keen perception of the meaning of tradition.

But the ideal of Nationalism is reflected most clearly in the work of Mazzini. As an enthusiast and a prophet he saw more clearly than his contemporaries, but the ideal he expressed was not private. By contrast with the ideal of unity under a sovereign Mazzini maintained that 'United Italy can only be founded by the Italian people'. In the *Duties of Man* he says that we can do nothing singly for humanity, 'our watchword is Association'.<sup>2</sup> 'Natural division will take the place', he declares, 'of arbitrary divisions sanctioned by evil governments.' 'The countries of the peoples will arise instead of the countries of kings and privileged classes: and between these countries there will be harmony and fraternity.' Thus first the law and government must express the character of the people and all inherited artificial divisions must be abolished; but secondly—and this was of immense value in the eyes of Mazzini, a people did not exist for its own advantage only. Nationalism implied

Filicaia's bitter sonnet: 'Italia, Italia . . .

Ch' or giù dall' Alpi non vedrei torrenti  
Scender d' armati, e del tuo sangue tinta  
Bever l' onda del Po gallici armenti.'

<sup>1</sup> This book was once powerful enough to be suppressed by the Berlin Government. An English translation appeared.

<sup>2</sup> *Duty of Man*, ch. v; the following quotations are from the same work.

for him not merely the rights but the duties and functions of nations. 'God divided humanity into distinct groups or nuclei, thus creating the germ of nationality.' 'Your country is the sign of the mission God has given you to fulfil towards humanity.' A nation therefore is great not by reference to its size but to the 'idea' for which it stands: 'country is not a territory; it is the Idea to which it gives birth'.

The ideal, therefore, in its highest form was democratic and also involved the conception of group-duties; and even in the half-conscious appreciation of the many nationalism implied these two guiding hopes for a better future.

#### Criticism of the Ideal.

We must, however, turn to criticism; for this ideal also is limited. The deficiencies of Nationalism seem to be chiefly, first, a narrowing of the political outlook. Local development tends to become village-politics, and the effort to maintain the soul of a nation often results in producing a segregate barbarism. This is not merely what might occur, but what has occurred; for dying languages have been revived and have proved obstacles to human intercourse rather than expressions of a characteristic culture. Professed nationalists forget that, in spite of the disadvantage in some cases, there is a definite advantage in others for many nations to be one state.<sup>1</sup> Small groups have undoubtedly gained by being associated with others under the same law and government. There is nothing

<sup>1</sup> This does not imply the false exaggeration of Lord Acton, *History of Freedom*, where Nationalism is treated as necessarily wrong and obstructive to progress.

specially sacred about racial grouping ; but sometimes it is good and sometimes it is bad for the group to have its own government. Small groups in the Austrian Empire have gained in peace and civilization by not having their own institutions ; and in Switzerland we have an example of distinct racial groups being better for being united in one state.

The narrow politics of extreme Nationalism has also often created group jealousy or group hostility. Chauvinism in France once produced an almost barbaric hatred of everything German, and every race, growing larger, tends to develop its provincial jealousy into what is called Imperial policy. Thus Nationalism supports war and cramps progress just as effectually as Imperialism. Indeed, the two names in their sinister meaning seem to refer to the same very limited political outlook ; for what is Nationalism in a small group becomes Imperialism when the group is powerful.<sup>1</sup> Nations which can regard other nations as rivals are on the high road to militarism and despotism, although their smallness and poverty may prevent the real character of their Nationalism from showing itself.

Again, Nationalism has been connected with the strange doctrine of non-interference which at one time implied that it was no business of one group of men if torture, disease, or tyranny were prevalent in another group. As I propose to say in dealing with Imperialism, it is very difficult indeed to decide when and how one group should concern itself with the fortunes of another. Governing

<sup>1</sup> The arguments against Imperialism in J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism*, in so far as they are against national predominance, are equally valid against Nationalism.

others in spite of their own will, even if it be for their own good, is an obsolete policy ; but, on the other hand, no civilized community can regard with indifference what are diseases in the social organism of other communities. At least it is possible that such diseases may spread, and mere self-love would urge the community to interfere.

But it seems possible to go even further. A self-respecting community can hardly conceive that it exists for its own interests only. For the greatness of a nation is not measured by wealth or power but by the kind of life it maintains ; and a nation which stands for liberty or order or any element of civilization cannot be satisfied unless other nations too may share what is believed to be of value.

#### **Value of the Ideal.**

What then is valuable in this ideal as regards the future ? We may answer by distinguishing the value of a nation if thought of separately from its value in relation to others, that is to say, first the relation between individuals of the same race must be considered, and then the relation of all the individuals of the same race to all those of any other. Within its own boundaries a nation should develop fully its own character. Just as the individual should not model himself altogether upon some one else, even though he may receive hints and corrections from the study of others ; so the nation should be conceived as having a separate character, distinct from that of any other nation. There is no reason why distinct national characters should be opposed by so many idealists, who speak as though a common humanity was our only moral ground for action ; good individual morals do not

imply that I should neglect what is characteristic of myself, and so it is the duty of each group to see to its own characteristic development. The relations between Englishmen should not be the same as those between Frenchmen or Germans. The value of Nationalism, so far as it implies a relation of one nation to the other, is but a fuller development of the same value as that which each finds in independence. For if each nation is to develop its own characteristics, then each nation is valuable to every other not as a rival of exactly the same kind but as a contrast ; and humanity at large is benefited by the preservation of so many distinct types. For the human race is not at its best when every man or every group is a copy of every other. Civilization progresses by differentiation as well as by assimilation of interests and character, and we cannot afford to neglect a policy which may develop differences in a world in which communication and cheap manufacture may gradually level out all the variety of the race. Thus in spite of its obvious limitations, something remains of the ideal of Nationalism—something which may illuminate our political thought and guide our action.

It is clear, however, that until the village-politics, the narrow outlook and the group-jealousy, which accompany some forms of Nationalism are destroyed, no real progress can be made. Before developing to the full the characteristics of the group to which they belong, men must understand that such development does not necessarily imply conflict with any other group ; and such understanding can only come from the rational consideration of political facts. It must be seen that one nation need not expand at the expense of another,

any more than one family or one individual at the expense of another ; although it must be admitted that in fact such conflict is only too common. As we shall see in a later chapter, development at the expense of some other is only necessary if what one has the other must lack,<sup>1</sup> and this again could only be the case if there was a definite limit to the supply of needs, as Malthus imagined. But in the growth of appliances for utilizing Nature we may see evidence for believing that the resources of the human race may grow even more speedily than our consciousness of new needs. And if this be so, national groups may each have sufficient supply without tearing one another piecemeal over some rags and bones of conquest. Idealists may preach peace and statesmen continue arbitration, but we shall never arrive at the next stage in the development of national groups until the average political imagination has been more educated. Lack of imagination keeps men enthralled to obsolete situations. If they could but see themselves differently they would soon be different, and when the greater number of each nation can regard other nations as co-operating and not as conflicting, then the best Nationalism will be realized.<sup>2</sup>

As things now stand, the Nationalism which was the ideal of small oppressed or divided races has become identified with Imperialism when the nation has secured its position. The Italy which arose at

<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed that I say 'lack', not 'do without': we may do without many things which we do not 'lack' because our needs are otherwise supplied.

<sup>2</sup> This is not impossible, since already Yorkshire is able to regard Sussex as friendly and Scotland is able to regard England as co-operating. The next stage is for England to regard Germany, &c., as co-operating in civilization.

the call of Mazzini pursued the suppression of local development in Eritrea, and still pursues it in Tripoli. But if Nationalism implies anything, surely it indicates the right of others to govern themselves; and it must gradually be understood to mean that all national groups are to develop on characteristic lines. Thus nations must be thought of as friendly and not as necessarily hostile to one another.

I do not mean to imply that armaments should be abolished. They should not be abolished until the need for them has disappeared; and that need can only be destroyed by the education of the political imagination. But political facts at present do not allow of our considering any such far-off ideal; since the majority in every nation are still uncivilized, and many of 'the few' in every nation are obsessed with antiquated and obsolete political conceptions. But even if armaments must continue to grow, political education may also progress in the direction of showing how the resources of the Earth may be shared by all the different groups of men.

It is evident that if the intelligence used for outwitting other groups or overawing them by increase of warlike implements were used to exploit the resources of Nature, there would be more than enough to supply the extremest desires for development of all the nations. If diplomacy gradually gave place to political thinking and strategy to engineering, nations would each feel the need of the other and man would use Nature for the increase and not for the destruction of humanity.



## CHAPTER IX

### MODERN IMPERIALISM

#### **Preliminary Considerations.**

WE approach issues now which are more dangerous for the use of reason because they are still subjects for political controversy; and where parties have adopted certain words as the expressions of their programme, argument is more common than reasoning. As to liberty, order, or unity, there is a general agreement; and even if they are not usually subjected to rational criticism, they are supposed to be absolved from party interests. No politician would dare to say that he opposed order or liberty; although he might for rhetorical purposes contrast his 'true' order with the misrepresentation of order among his opponents. All are, however, supposed to understand, at least vaguely, the meaning of order, and to regard it, at least theoretically, as admirable.

But the case is different with Imperialism. Men rage against it or rant in its favour, usually without even an attempt to discover what they themselves mean by the word. Thus reasoning is made difficult; and yet here its use is all the more necessary than it is in what we may call the conventional ideals of politics.

Imperialism is an ideal in the sense that some desire to see established, or believe that there is

already established, a system which may be developed of relations between groups of men which they call by this name. Those who approve of such a system call themselves in England Imperialists.

Others again call by the name Imperialism a system which, if it exists, they wish to destroy and, if it does not exist, they desire to prevent.<sup>1</sup> To these the word is unholy as it is holy to those who call themselves Imperialists, but it would be worth while to discuss whether these opposing parties are thinking of the same system. What is opposed is a system of oppression; what is maintained is a system of beneficent government. As regards the political facts of the present day in England, these two schools have been called the bombastic and the pessimistic;<sup>2</sup> the first are almost Oriental in their language, and they tend to consider vastness as in itself admirable, and the second in the effort to be moderate neglect obvious facts.

I propose, therefore, first to express what seems to be in the minds of those who advocate Imperialism. But I shall neglect entirely the sentiments of leader-writers in what are called 'Imperialist' papers, since I am concerned to find the *reasons* for which Imperialism may be maintained, indicating by that name a single system of law and government in many different lands and races.

Nearly all thinking Imperialists<sup>3</sup> would recognize

<sup>1</sup> The best example of this school is to be found in J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism* (published by Nisbet & Co., 1902).

<sup>2</sup> Seeley, *Expansion*, p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> The contrast in the use of the word in modern times as compared with ancient is made in Lord Cromer's work on the subject, but he excludes the self-governing colonies

the dangerous associations of the word 'Empire'. The Empire of Napoleon was formed by the conquering ambition of a military genius, who used the national enthusiasm of France for suppressing the development of other nations. The Empire of the Middle Ages was a ghost. The Empire of Rome, admirable as it may have been in effect, was formed by the subordination of a world to a city. The Empire of Alexander was the unstable formation of a brief success and accident. Earlier Empires were chiefly systems for collecting tribute. But with none of these does the modern Imperialist desire to class the Empire he believes desirable. Lord Cromer<sup>1</sup> has well stated the contrast between the Roman and the British Empire. Both grew without any definite policy of aggrandizement, and even in spite of the opposition of one party in the State; but whereas civilizing was seldom a conscious purpose with Rome, there has been a continuous tradition within the British Empire that government should be for the good of the governed. Political morality is now higher, official corruption is less, slavery has disappeared and, owing to the advance of science, mortality is lessened.<sup>2</sup>

An Imperialism which is modern, therefore, is

and the fact of representative popular government in England, so that some of the most important differences between the old and the new Empires are entirely omitted. Lord Bryce makes the contrast clearer in *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, vol. i.

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 25 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 112. Famine and disease decimated the Roman Empire. 'Nowhere', says Cromer, 'does the policy of modern differ more widely from that of ancient Imperialism than in dealing with matters of this sort.'

like the ancient in so far as it implies that vast territories are under the same government; but it is unlike the ancient in allowing for more independent local development, in not depending on the tribute of dependencies, and in having within it representative popular government. It must also be added that earlier Empires have generally been without any contemporary rivals, whereas the modern Empire is only one among many.

The difficulties of establishing over vast areas one system of law and government are also much greater now than they were in ancient times. The world is older, and whereas Rome, for example, had to deal with dissentient but indefinite tribes and vague worships, England has to face the existence of distinct national groups and complete and exclusive religious systems.<sup>1</sup> Again, languages are more fixed and the assimilation of races is therefore much more difficult now than it was for Rome. The areas also are vaster now and the populations greater.<sup>2</sup>

If in spite of all difficulties many sincerely believe that Imperialism is good, there must be reasons which underlie the merely accidental acquisition of territory by which all modern Empires have grown. And without reference to its growth, we may define a modern Empire as a vast territory or many races under one government and with one dominant partner.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cromer, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers, &c. may be found in J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism*, p. 17. Cromer (*op. cit.*, p. 15) gives 410,000,000 inhabitants and 11,500,000 square miles for the British Empire. 44,000,000 are in the United Kingdom, 205,000,000 are Asiatic, and 48,000,000 African. Rome had 100,000,000 and 2,500,000 square miles.

<sup>3</sup> The presence of a dominant partner distinguishes an

### Origins of Empires.

The actual process by which such Empires have been formed does not much concern us here ; since it is, for my present purpose, more necessary to understand what was and is thought desirable than what has occurred. But it is worthy of note that some Empires have been almost accidental in their formation, some have been designed.<sup>1</sup> France is in Algeria, Belgium in the Congo, Germany in West Africa, the United States in the Philippines, Russia in Central Asia, and England in Egypt : but in some cases accident, in others design, has led to the present position. The British adventure in Empire may be taken as typical of accident. In 'colonies' we found that men of our race had settled many distant and hitherto sparsely inhabited lands, and that they still desired law and government of the type to which their forefathers had been accustomed. Lord Durham's mission to Canada in 1838 ended in the first clear establishment of self-government for colonies.<sup>2</sup> As regards 'dependencies'<sup>3</sup> the history of our adventure in India is instructive. A trading company forced tribute, under cover of British power, from weaker peoples.<sup>4</sup>

Empire from a Federation such as the United States was before the Spanish War.

<sup>1</sup> More like the Roman than like Alexander's or Napoleon's.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cromer, *op. cit.*, p. 17. I mean that before this there was no clear principle as to the extension of the English State-system.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lewis, *Government of Dependencies*. Here the State extended and not the nation, but here too the flag followed trade and not trade the flag.

<sup>4</sup> In the charter of 1686 they are 'to make peace and war

Permanent administration became necessary, and the British State eventually established in 1857 'the principle which lies at the root of all sound administration, that administration and commercial exploitation should not be entrusted to the same hands'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in an effort to have secure frontiers<sup>2</sup> or to find land for surplus population we carried the same law and government very far from its original home. There have been political oppositions to advance;<sup>3</sup> there have been definite military checks.<sup>4</sup> But we have almost blindly gone forward until at last we 'woke to find that we had made ourselves masters of half the habitable globe in a fit of absence of mind'.<sup>5</sup>

Such are the facts with respect also to the presence, for example, of the United States in the Philippines; but there has been another tendency during the nineteenth century which exalts strength and vastness. Carlyle is a forerunner of a certain form of Imperialism,<sup>6</sup> especially in his gospel of

with the heathen nations'. For the whole subject see Seeley's *Expansion*, p. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Cromer, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> So France was forced to march down to the Sahara, and Russia into Central Asia. Cromer, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Hesitation marked the policy of Rome as of England. For England Mr. Gladstone's policy is the chief example of political opposition to an almost inevitable expansion.

<sup>4</sup> I follow the present tendency to judge the Indian Mutiny as a military and not a national movement.

<sup>5</sup> Seeley, *Expansion of England*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *L'Impérialisme anglais*, J. Gazcau. German Imperialism (as in von Bülow's *Imperial Germany*) is based much more upon preconceived design than was ours. This is perhaps simply due to the much later date at which Germany began to act upon the outer world, but it makes

exceptional heroes and missions, and the same romanticism seems to have affected Cecil Rhodes, as it influenced Bismarck in the union of Germany.

The Empires which have been designed are such as the German has been outside of Europe. A definite plan was followed by the State itself of finding a colonial market. For example, Dr. Peters was sent in 1884 with blank treaty forms to the African mainland opposite Zanzibar, and in 1885 the German Emperor extended his suzerainty over the native chiefs, in spite of the fact that Zanzibar was practically an English protectorate and that English commercial interest had been predominant in those parts.<sup>1</sup> In West Africa the same process brought to the German State the immense district of the Cameroons: the German State definitely hoisted its flag in districts where English commerce had the chief place. The native 'kings' had actually asked in 1879 for British law to be established in the districts which by diplomatic contrivance became German in 1885.

The contrast is clear. The English State reluctantly follows energetic commercial Englishmen: the German State has attempted to create a commerce by extending its system of law and government. With England the flag follows trade, and with Germany trade, reluctantly, follows the flag.<sup>2</sup>

the German writers incapable of understanding the absent-mindedness of England.

<sup>1</sup> Rose, *Devel. of European Nations*, Partition of Africa, ch. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> The aim of Germany has been partly 'glory' and partly 'cash', but since England has not restricted trade to her colonies where she has succeeded there is a gain for the commerce of the world. Where Germany has come trade is restricted. (Rose, *ibid.*, p. 536.)

The forces which have made modern Imperialism are easily recognized. First, there is ease of communication; for it is a simpler matter now to go from England to Canada than it was in the Middle Ages to go from London to York. But where communication is easy, language, custom, and law tend to be the same. Mountains are tunnelled, rivers bridged, and even the ocean may be a highway, so that the people of different localities are not left to themselves as completely as they once were. For although the majority are still as stationary as ever, nevertheless they are in touch with men who come and go, and they may write letters or send telegrams continually. This alone would militate against the growth of any new national groups as distinct from one another as are the old nations.

But with ease of communication goes an interchange of resources. At one time famine could decimate one country while its neighbour had plenty, and yet the difficulties of trade were such that food could not be taken from place to place. In our day every group depends for some of its food and clothing on some other group, sometimes very far distant.<sup>1</sup>

And in the third place, among civilized people no

<sup>1</sup> The interchange of resources had been made a special method for keeping or developing Empires. The German Zollverein has been quoted as showing how a trade agreement may support a political union. But there were many other forces, not trade, which brought the German States together, and in fact, so far as the British Empire is concerned, Canada is politically united with England, but its banking system is dependent on the United States. Trade relations do not involve political union, nor the other way round.



group has its interests confined to the land it inhabits. English capital is employed in the railways of the United States or in the Argentine, French thrift makes it possible for Russia to borrow, and every extension of territory in Asia or Africa attempted by European nations is really due to the need of protecting interests which have already arisen in the new territory. I am not arguing that the expansion of trade and the existence of larger markets necessarily lead to the formation of Empires: I say only that these are some of the forces which actually did produce Imperialism. First came the actual bond between peoples with the same interest or an inherited bond made by war and continued by special trading, and then came the conception that such bonds between different lands or even different races were good. Thus with a ground in established fact the imagination goes just beyond the fact and constructs an ideal. Men see the two tendencies, one to the separation and localizing of interests and the formation of distinct groups, and the other to the unification of interest and the simplification of law and government. Those who desire to maintain and develop the second of these two tendencies are Imperialists; and the others are Nationalists. I am not now comparing the two ideals, but only showing what forces made the ideal of Imperialism inevitable.

#### **Imperialism and Cosmopolitanism.**

The recent tendency of trade is all in the direction of delocalizing interests, and it follows that the political outlook is also delocalized. Men begin to understand and to feel that no group can be isolated, and they further perceive the gain to be

had from the increase of more intimate relations between different groups. The result among abstract thinkers and poetic enthusiasts is cosmopolitanism, for it is undeniable that humanity at large is now beginning to feel its common interests, and trade and even custom now tend to pass over diplomatic or governmental boundaries. We cannot, even with the most exaggerated 'patriotism', refuse to receive the benefits we may derive from people of another tongue, so that the cosmopolitan enthusiast is often opposed to Imperialism, although the same force has made his ideal and that of the Imperialist ; but it is reasonable that what should most offend is the use of one's own argument to maintain what seems to be an opposite conclusion. The cosmopolitan hates the Imperialist for not going far enough : the Imperialist despises the cosmopolitan as feather-brained because he goes too far.

Cosmopolitanism or Humanitarianism, 'The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world', is too ineffective an ideal at present for me to discuss it. Its strength may be greater in the near future, but at present it is not a political force. The smallest hint of national or local interest is sufficient to disperse it as completely as though it were smoke in the wind of real passion. It is as yet too indefinite even to be understood by the majority.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This implies that the statements by such men as Jaurès, that Socialism could prevent national wars, are not proved. In France the conflict between national interests and cosmopolitan ideals is being fought out, but so far the majority are not cosmopolitan. Very few men are really able to grasp the common interests of man as man, and these few have often weakened their effectiveness by neglecting other and simpler bonds.

✓ Imperialism is a sort of half-way house. It expresses the delocalization of interests and the wider horizon of modern political thinking, but it does not go too far. Its horizon is still limited by racial prejudice; and that, as all politicians would admit, is not detrimental to its effectiveness nor to its present value.<sup>1</sup> The conceptions of the average man grow slowly: he cannot at once move from village-politics to cosmopolitanism. He admits that his interests are not confined to his village, but he feels that his interests cannot be the same as those of *all* other men. And in a sense, in spite of 'idealists', he is right. There is a real bond between people in different lands who have the same language, law, and custom, which does not exist between those who are merely connected by trade. We cannot treat people of the same race, or even with the same form of government, as though one were nothing more to the other than are any human beings; and if we are to recognize national distinctions, we must also recognize those no less real distinctions which may be called super-national.

#### **Imperialism as an antidote to Provincialism.**

Since every ideal arises from some perception of an evil, we must now ask against what Imperialism is a protest. The answer appears in the popular phrase 'Little-Englander', which, as a term of

<sup>1</sup> It is denied by Mr. J. A. Hobson (*Imperialism*, ch. i) that there is any such half-way house between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism. He would regard Empires as obstructing Cosmopolitanism, but it seems to me that they do so no more than State-Nations. The present war is just as much due to Nationalism as to Imperialism. Small groups are just as obstructive to peace policy as are large.

abuse, appears to indicate that men so called desire to limit the activities of England to a very narrow sphere of local interest. The political taunt is as valueless as are most forms of abuse, but it rests upon at least a vague disdain of village-politics. The jingo and the 'big-navy' maniac appeal to a sort of germinal reason which forbids all men to limit their interest to their immediate surroundings, and although we must here neglect the defence of jingoism as a psychological aberration which is of interest to the candid historian, we must allow that there does exist a natural tendency to village-politics. Even attention to social distress may narrow one's outlook; and the attempt to confine one's attention to what are called immediate needs and local distresses may limit our power to deal even with such distresses and to supply even such needs. The wider outlook is not necessarily less practical, nor are the best social reformers always those who have no other interest than social reform. There is a kind of liberal-minded narrowness which forbids us to imagine any interests beyond the actual range of our eyesight. In the name of independence we are warned to distrust any generous sentiment which may entammel us in the affairs of distant peoples. Our imaginations are cramped and our intellect twisted by continual squinting at what is under our nose. That such narrowness does exist may be shown not only from the leaders in anti-Imperial papers but in the news-columns of the Imperialist papers themselves. A murder in Tooting will be given more space than a revolution in South Africa; the dresses at a levée at Buckingham Palace will displace the account of the Australian elections. And of course the English papers are not the leading

examples of the tendency to village interests and village scandal. In the United States the daily papers are filled with ludicrous details called 'personal', concerning persons whose importance to the world at large is infinitesimal. France, Germany, and Italy provide, in their popular newspapers, examples of the same narrowness of outlook.

I recognize, of course, that this may be the true end of newspapers—to provide us with local scandal for use in conversation. But the point is that the tendency to village politics exists and Imperialism may in some way correct it. The correction, however, cannot be made by the vague sentiments of leading articles; it must be based upon knowledge of distant lands or diverse peoples. For it is futile to 'feel Imperially' if you 'think provincially', and how can any man think of larger issues if he is unacquainted with any facts but those of his village? The effort of such an historian as Seeley was intended to give power to the anti-provincial tendency. In Germany and in France there is the same sense that, whatever the reason why vast tracts of Africa are under the same law and government, their existence must be a fundamental fact to be considered in any political thinking. Even if we think that England may eventually move out of India, the mere evacuation would make an immense difference to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. And looking forward, 'If Russia and the United States hold together they will dwarf such European States as France and Germany, and England too if England means only the United Kingdom'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seeley, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

**The Case for an Imperial Policy.**

We must now consider the positive reasoning which gives force to the ideal of Modern Imperialism. Granting (1) that there are in existence vast groups of men using in distant lands the same form of law and government, and that (2) the forces which have produced this situation are natural and may be developed with advantage, and also that (3) the contrary tendency to provincialism is to be opposed: our question is—What is hoped for that is implied in the word Imperialism? We are first to say the best that can be said for Imperialism, as it is implied, in admitting it to be an ideal, that it is not altogether obstructive to progress; and we may then proceed to criticism.<sup>1</sup>

It will be generally agreed that, other things being equal, the greater the amount of territory over which the same laws run, the better it is for the inhabitants. Other things may never really be equal; for, of course, the same laws running over many lands may lack adaption to local needs. But of that we shall speak later. It does, in any case, seem clear that there is an advantage in laws with a very widely admitted validity. Thus for purposes of trade it is an advantage that the law of contract should be the same in England, Australia, and Canada. Most merchants would admit that trouble and expense would be saved if the same laws held for France also and Italy. But that such

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. A. Hobson attempts to give every credit to Imperialists, but the best he can say of them is that they are innocently misled. Their intentions may be admirable, but their policy is altogether pernicious. I cannot, however, admit that the policy is any more pernicious than that of undiluted Nationalism.

should be the case may be an impossible dream ; at any rate it is reasonable to maintain and develop that similarity of law where it does already exist. Thus again much unnecessary confusion is created in the United States of America from the fact that the laws concerning patent medicines vary in different States. A bottle of patent medicine has to be certified by several different official stamps if it is to be sent out for sale in many different States. And this is but a small example of the restraints to trade which arbitrary governmental divisions of territory may cause. Thus, perhaps, in opposition to some form of the Nationalist ideal, it may be a gain for a group, even if distinct in character and tradition, to be united to other groups under the same law and government. There are common interests even between distinct races which should take precedence of local needs, and such local needs may sometimes be best served by subordinating them to a non-national State.

And I do not merely argue that the inhabitants will make more money if the laws they live by are valid for vast territories. The effect on life in general is more important than the effect on their pockets. For relations with distant people are thereby rendered simpler. One is more easily able to communicate with a greater number of other men ; and the consequence of this again is both a life of more varied interests and, because we can all take the fundamental laws for granted, our minds are freed for consideration of other issues. But if one does not even know upon what common basis one may deal with one's neighbour, much time and thought is wasted on the mere preliminaries to human intercourse.

Again, the fact that we can think and act in connection with many different races, or at least with our own race in many different lands, is a step onwards in what may be called civilization. For what distinguishes a cultured man from a savage is the ability to 'extend himself', so to speak, over more of the universe and to get more out of life. I do not mean only that there will be more interests and occupations and therefore more chance for the individuality of a greater number of men. That also is true; but there will be as well a greater wideness of mind in every man. I am well aware that the anti-Imperialist distrusts the seeming indefiniteness of one who turns his eyes away even for a moment from the poverty or disease which is perhaps on his doorstep; but probably it would be a gain even for social reform if the citizens of a great state could think effectively of the really vast powers of their law and government—not, of course, for the purpose of boasting or self-gratulation, but in order that they may feel the nature of the instruments with which reform may be made. There is a certain breadth of vision which is by no means unpractical in the conception of the English State as 'that new Venice whose streets are the oceans'.

We have so far discussed the admirable elements which may be found in the movement called Imperial. We have attempted to speak of the ideal—that is to say, of the desire for a good which is generally recognized. And the arguments for Imperialism must be considered as valid for the maintenance of some form of non-national or super-national State even if we do not use the word Empire.



**Criticism.**

But every ideal is embodied in a form which cramps and may even destroy it; and modern ideals are no more absolved from this than were ancient ideals. Liberty has been made to excuse licence, and order has been made to justify tyranny. So also Imperialism often shelters a provincialism which is all the more pernicious because unrecognized.

It must be now our task to speak of the unjustifiable use of the word Imperialism; or, if it be said that this evil use is the only correct one, then we shall have to admit that Imperialism is pernicious—obstructive to human progress and deadly to rational politics. But I do not admit that ‘Imperialism’ is altogether a word for ignoble ambitions, and therefore I prefer to say that what is now to be discussed is the misuse of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly Imperialism is often supposed to imply that the inhabitants of an Empire are more civilized than others, or that their civilization is more valuable than that of small nations. So that the German or the Englishman may look with condescension upon the Dane or the Swiss. That they have advantages I do not deny; but to say that therefore they are superior is equivalent to saying that a man who has the advantage of living in a very large house is more admirable than the inhabitant of a smaller house. The abundance of appliances

<sup>1</sup> Here appears the danger of using a controversial word for an ideal. It will be understood that I put aside the question as to what *ought* to be the meaning of ‘Imperialism’. I simply *make* it mean something with good in it as well as bad.

for living does not necessarily imply the more excellent quality of the life of the owner.<sup>1</sup>

The egregious insolence of a Kipling may impress the unthinking. A bombastic provincialism styling itself 'Imperial' may give assurance to human animals who have hardly begun to understand what civilization means, whose interests are confined to what they call 'sport' and whose enthusiasm can be roused only by the beating of drums. Thus the uncivilized inhabitant of London or Berlin is led to imagine that he is divinely appointed to make all other men into an image of himself; and he believes it all the more readily in proportion as he lacks all perception of what is really valuable in England or Germany. For in a civilized country there are always many who are uneducated or uncivilized, and these are more eager than others to condescend to 'foreigners'.

The somnolent gourmand of a fashionable club reckons himself superior to the artist of India or China; or being still more 'Imperial', if his club be in London regards a German scholar as a savage, and if his club be in Berlin regards an English magistrate as a primitive tyrant. If this is Imperialism, how does it differ from village politics? Not, certainly, in its point of view; only perhaps in the universalism of its impertinence.

We have much to be proud of in Western Civilization, much that 'the East' may be benefited by receiving from us; but what precisely is it that they may gain and we be most proud to give? We have the work of Darwin and Pasteur for the freedom of mind and body; that of Mommsen and Gibbon for the understanding of our race; that of

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly stated by the 'Imperialist' Seeley, *op. cit.*

poets without number, painters, and musicians, for revealing the possibilities of life. And we generally give to benighted heathens locomotives, electric light, and potted meat; even if, in an occasional revival of conscience, we limit our beneficent importation of gin and forced labour.

A sane critic will not mistake the trader for a representative of Western civilization, nor an occasional poet for the average product of the East. It is as easy to prove Eastern wisdom superior to that of the West by comparing carefully-made selections as it is easy for the cockney to imagine himself civilized because he is a fellow countryman of Darwin. Each attitude is impossible to maintain in face of impartial criticism.

Perhaps even allowing for our natural prejudices and our inevitable lack of understanding, the civilization to which we belong may seem very much superior to any other. But suppose that it is superior, its chief claim to superiority will be in that its value will be perceived by those who do not belong to it.

That claim is completely destroyed if force be used to make others adopt it.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps they are blind to our excellences, but they will hardly be made to see by a process of blindfolding them; although of course they may be thus compelled to say that they see in order to prevent further 'enlightenment' of this kind.

Next, Imperialism often implies that the customs

<sup>1</sup> This completely destroys any possibility of extending Kultur by force (according to the von Bernhardt gospel). But it also destroys the possibility of an Imperialism which would blow into fragments half a savage tribe in order to present to the other half the Anglicized version of the Hebrew Bible.

according to which we find it convenient to live are so admirable for every one that we are called upon to force them upon unwilling others who do not recognize as well as we do how excellent we ourselves are. But this, so far from being anti-provincialism, is ultra-provincialism. It is village politics in its highest form.<sup>1</sup>

And we must needs observe that there is no instance of Imperial law or government being the result of a common consideration of the excellent elements in the law or government of all the component groups. That may be implied in the ideal ; but practically Imperial law and government is always the system which has been natural to one of the component groups and is imposed by that group on the others. It makes no difference that the group thus imposing its own system on others does so with the best of intentions and under the impression that it is the finest possible.

Again, quite apart from the provincial spirit of professed Imperialists, there is a tendency to suppress in the interest of an Empire the development of local differences.<sup>2</sup> I have already admitted that such local differences may sometimes be obstructive to the true development of the different localities themselves ; such would be the ground for assimilating the governmental or judicial systems of people living distant from one another. But here I argue that the valid objection to crude limitations of trade or of interest by reference to small districts

<sup>1</sup> Prince von Bülow's *Imperial Germany* is an instance. He says (p. 104) that the Germans are not good at politics, and the rest of his book is a proof of it.

<sup>2</sup> It is more than a 'tendency' in the German treatment of the Poles or the Russian treatment of the Finns.

is unjustifiably used as an excuse for suppressing differences which are valuable both to the differing peoples and to the world at large. No political ideal can be reasonably used to act as a sort of steam-roller of progress to blot out all the intricate unevenness of the race in the interest of a crudely unimaginative view of unity. And yet precisely this has been done. Imperialism has more than once rolled out the hills and dales into the flat monotony of a soulless people, whose position is regarded as progressive only because they have ceased to write poetry or to aspire greatly and know how to drive trams or dig coal.

If there is a point at which local interests must give way to larger issues there is also a point at which no issue however vast should trench upon local interests. The group has a soul of its own, though the group itself may be small and poor; and if one says to an individual, 'Your desire for an income must give place here to the necessities of the State, and you must pay a tax,' the individual cannot urge his private interest as an excuse for refusing. But if one says to the individual, 'The State demands that you should have nothing but food and clothing—no art, no pleasure, and no ambitions,' then surely the individual may reply, 'Such demands can come only from what is no State at all, in any sense in which I can use the term'. So I imagine the small group or nation which is forced to give up, in the name of Imperialism, its custom, its language, its law, and its forms of government, may well object that such an Empire is an unwarrantable insolence. Any Empire which can be admitted by civilized and rational beings must allow of local distinctions within it.

Lastly, with respect to the nation which is predominant in an Empire, the advantage of the majority is often obstructed by the necessities of Imperialism. It may be dependent for maintenance upon militarism, a strong official caste and secret despotic government; all of which are well-known obstacles to free popular institutions. Further, the financial advantage of Imperialist policy tends to be confined to a few,<sup>1</sup> for where the issues are vast and complicated, private gain can be more easily contrived under the guise of popular interest.

Such are the objections against Imperialism, or, to put it more carefully, such are the limitations or dangers against which a sane Imperialism should contend. It will be noticed that these are all objections or dangers which menace any form of Nationalism so soon as any group has become more powerful than its neighbours. They are not peculiar to Empires. A great State which maintains the same law and government in vast territories and among many races has its own greatness to contend with if it is to be a benefit and not a hindrance to civilization.

### Federalism.

We come then to what Plato would call 'the saving word'. It is Federalism.<sup>2</sup> Only a few

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*: (1) 'our modern Imperialist policy has had no appreciable influence whatever upon the determination of our external trade,' p. 35. It is there shown by statistics that increase of territory has not led to proportional increase of Imperial trade. And again, (2) 'the business interests of the nation as a whole are subordinated to those of certain sectional interests that usurp control of the national resources and use them for private gain' (p. 51).

<sup>2</sup> So Cromer, *op. cit.*, p. 12, 'the true conception of

years ago the word was still without any concrete political associations for the majority of Englishmen; but since the disputes concerning Ulster much has been said about a 'federal solution'. I am not, however, concerned with immediate practical issues and I shall neglect entirely the possible use to any of the English political parties which the word Federalism may have in the near future. I am concerned only with that type of Imperialism which is based on a federation of equals, rather than on the superintendence of one of the component groups of an Empire. And the use of the words I shall not trouble to justify; perhaps a federal Empire is a contradiction in terms, perhaps on the other hand Federalism implies too loose an organization—one of alliance rather than of unity. But I use the word here simply to express the fact that it is no longer possible to consider that vast number of men, for example, inhabiting Australia, Canada, England and Ireland, not to mention Egypt and India, as united in groups one of which must dominate all the others. That would involve insolence, provincialism, and the suppression of local vitality. The only possible way, therefore, of regarding the whole vast group as one is by supposing that each component group is united as an equal with the others in a Federation.

federation is a necessary precursor . . . to the successful execution of a broad Imperial policy'. And Seeley says that the greatest change in modern Empires is that 'a federal system has been added to the representative'. *Op. cit.*, p. 348. In Sidgwick, *El. of Politics*, the theory of Federal government is given; and in Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, details are given of Australian government.

Equality of the component groups is the first essential. I do not mean that all must be equally wealthy or possess equivalent amounts of territory. Still less do I mean that each must possess the same organizations, the same character, or the same military power. When we speak of the political equality of individuals we do not mean that each man is as wealthy or as powerful, or even as wise, as every other. In the same way there is nothing irrational in speaking of the political equality of the component groups in a federal Empire. What we mean by such a phrase is that each group is most likely to know what is best for itself; that none may be treated as politically incompetent by any other; that each may express through its own institutions, governmental or legislative, its own conception of its own interests.

And since the concrete example of the British Empire will be more cogent, let me refer to the supposed difficulty against equality (1) in the case of colonies (self-governing and other) and (2) in the case of dependent nationalities. First, it is continually supposed that England may regard the colonies as children. But we must not be the slaves of a metaphor: even if England is the mother-country, children are not supposed to be permanently incompetent to judge their own interests. We do not live now in the patriarchal, still less in the matriarchal state. In fact it may be more than suspected that children may have to look after the interests of their mother, since even parents have been known to be incompetent. I do not say that Canada will have to govern England against its will for its own good; but I say that such a situation would be as reasonable as the



opposite, in which the people of England<sup>1</sup> are supposed to look after the real interests of Canada in spite of the will of the Canadians. The conferences held in 1887 and 1902 were clear indications that the great self-governing colonies are beginning to feel their political equality with England.<sup>2</sup> Lord Bryce speaks with knowledge of 'the suspicion which colonies are apt to feel of a sort of patronage on the part of the mother-country'.<sup>3</sup>

But surely, it may be said, some colonies may be regarded as children. They are newly founded, and they are literally dependent for supplies if not even for good order upon 'the old country'. I admit, of course, that not every chance group may at once be regarded as politically equal to the older groups. At that rate any haphazard collection of emigrants might speedily attain a political power which none of them would ever reach by remaining at home. The group which I am now regarding as a 'colony' is one which has been *permanent* for many years. How long a permanence will make the group distinct I must leave it to practical politicians to decide. It is a question of rule-of-thumb and discovery by trial and error; no general rule can be given. And the group having been permanent must also have acquired

<sup>1</sup> I say carefully not 'England' but the 'people of England' because the real issue is as to the comparative competence for political judgement not among the few in each country but among the vast majority. It is at least arguable that the average of competence for political thinking is higher among 'colonists' than among either the villagers or the city hordes of England.

<sup>2</sup> At the second, eleven self-governing colonies were represented.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies, &c.*, vol. i, p. 552.

distinct characteristics,—a *self-consciousness* of itself as a group and a distinct complex of *interests*.

Secondly, as to what are called ‘dependent nationalities’—these are the results of historical accidents, generally warfare—which of course never proves, one way or the other, the political competence of the contending groups. But whatever the origin of the situation in such places as India or Egypt; or in the Cameroons with respect to Germany, or Algeria with respect to France—such a situation is a political fact which we cannot neglect to consider. What are we to say of it?

In this case also I see no obstacle to Federalism—the political equality of the groups—if they are clearly permanent, self-conscious, and possessed of distinct interests.

This is clearly implied even in extreme Imperialism of the English type, as we may see in Lord Cromer’s admission. The Englishman, he says, ‘is always striving to attain two ideals, which are apt to be mutually destructive—the ideal of good government which connotes the continuance of his own supremacy, and the ideal of self-government which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position. He is aware that empire must rest on one of two bases—an extensive military occupation or the principle of nationality.’<sup>1</sup> And few Englishmen would be willing to contemplate a purely military Empire. We should therefore be driven to develop local self-government, and that in the end must mean the federation of politically equal groups.

The units of the federal system where they do

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 118.

not at present exist would be very difficult to decide. For example, it is impossible to speak of Indian self-government, as though 'India' could be at present a unit having a simple relation to England. India is no more one than is Europe ;<sup>1</sup> and although there is growing up a general Indian sentiment, self-government based upon an identity of interests between all the inhabitants of a continent is absurdly impracticable. The end proposed, which it might take years to realize, would undoubtedly be the self-government of the distinct parts of India ; and this would mean the equality of right in deciding even to maintain any union with England. So extreme a conception of Federalism is naturally opposed by those who, like Lord Cromer, still speak of 'our Indian possessions',<sup>2</sup> although I can never find in ultra-Imperialist statements who 'we' are and how we can possibly 'possess' the Empire. 'At bottom', says Seeley, 'it implies the idea of an estate' to be worked for our benefit ; and that conception, he confesses, is 'barbaric and immoral'.<sup>3</sup> Compromise will always be the political excuse for incompetent and illogical thinking ; but I see no way out of the difficulty

<sup>1</sup> There are 147 distinct languages in India and at least five distinct types of religion, the chief of which, Hinduism (having 207,000,000 adherents), has innumerable varieties. See Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 127. So he says, 'the foundation-stone of Indian reform must be the steadfast maintenance of British supremacy'. The proof of which is the belief that *at present* to give over to other hands the suzerainty would 'almost certainly' lead to the extinction of civilization in India. But in the long run, I think, even Lord Cromer implies that we may have to hand on the torch.

<sup>3</sup> Seeley, *Expansion*, p. 77.

which does not imply either the complete dissolution of the connection between England and the constituent 'dependent' nations of the present Empire or an admission of these nations sooner or later to political equality.

But what are we to say if the groups are clearly not either permanent or self-conscious or distinct in interests? It is clearly impossible to regard the Zulus as having any political consciousness or definite and distinct political ambitions. I trust that I do not misrepresent the Zulus; for I know them, I confess, only from books. But I use them only as examples; and if they are more self-conscious as a group than I suppose them to be, let the reader think for himself of some other 'undeveloped' race. Of these it seems reasonable to suppose that they will be subordinated of *their own will*, if they are really lacking in all that I have supposed to be essential to the component equal groups of a federal Empire. The subordination must, however, be felt to be to their own interest.

The subject is an endless one, big with immediate consequences in England, France, Germany, and the United States. These composite Empires exist and I have tried to show that they are not altogether detrimental to progress if the dangers I have noted can be avoided. Imperialism if it is to develop must be reconciled with Nationalism, and there seems no possibility of this except through Federalism.

# CHAPTER X

## INDIVIDUALISM

### The Modern Social Problem.

THE relation of groups which we have so far considered under the headings of Nationalism and Imperialism is only one of the two most pressing problems of modern politics. We are always being reminded that the relation of the individuals composing these groups is also worth much thought. And indeed it may be cogently shown that what is called international policy, or even regional administration, would be an easy matter if all was well in the relation of individual to individual. But all is not well. I do not propose to say that everything is wrong, nor to give, in detail, evidence of the many things that certainly are wrong. It is true that one cannot appreciate an ideal without feeling the want from which that ideal arises, so that whoever is wholly satisfied with the life he and his fellows lead has no conception at all of what is producing social unrest. But with the satisfied it is almost impossible to deal, for if they have not read such books as Rowntree's *Poverty* or the plays of Mr. Galsworthy, or seen evil with their own eyes, they are not in a position to understand even ancient history.<sup>1</sup> And if they have heard or seen the facts and are still satisfied, they

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also *The World of Labour*, G. D. H. Cole, and *Round about a Pound a Week*, by Mrs. Pember Reeves; but the statement of the evils is endless in modern literature. Cf. in verse, W. W. Gibson, *Daily Bread*.

are beyond the reach of political reasoning—they are what the Greeks would have called ‘idiots’, being concerned only with private pleasures and pains. It is impossible to recite all the evils from which both Individualism and Socialism take their rise. It is sufficiently well known that in civilized nations not half the population is able even to live comfortably—much less to develop all human capacities; and half the population does not derive even the barest benefits from the elaborate organizations of modern government. The Individualist would say, therefore, that the individual must be given equal opportunities, and the Socialist that government must extend its organization to benefit more than the propertied class. The facts are the same for both Individualist and Socialist, and to these we must briefly refer before attempting to state the ideals of each.

In merely economic terms, half the income of each European nation is used for the benefit of about one-sixth of the population. Such general statements are, of course, valueless without detailed information, but the evidence of them will be found elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> For England the figures given in Mr. Chiozza Money’s *Riches and Poverty* have not been seriously challenged by his opponents. I quote this book, however, not as an authority, but as an indication of the direction in which men now look to

<sup>1</sup> The distribution of wealth in France is said to be of this kind: Of the 11,000,000 who are in direct receipt of income, 9,509,800 have under £100 per annum; 1,303,000 have between £100 and £400 per annum; 183,800 have from £400 to £4,000 per annum; and 3,400 have over £4,000 per annum. (A. de Lavergne et Paul Henry, *La Richesse de la France*.) For other countries the distribution has not been worked out.

find the nature of a political need. There it is said that, according to the income-tax statements, five and a half million people take every year £909,000,000, and the remaining thirty-nine million take £935,000,000. This means that incomes are so unevenly distributed that about one-seventh of the population takes half the national income,<sup>1</sup> and this disproportion tends to increase in the present organization of society. Now even if the figures usually given are exaggerated and the present situation gives to a great many in every country sufficient opportunity for civilized life, the economic situation needs to be considered, since it has never seriously been considered in all the ages preceding the nineteenth century. It is not argued that every one should have the same amount of income, nor can it be proved that differences in income are altogether pernicious. But so great a maldistribution, especially if it is increasing, clearly needs consideration. And further, it does seem to be connected with evils which are fundamental. Lack of income involves malnutrition, and that reacts upon the next generation. Thus Mr. Rowntree concludes 'a labourer is in poverty (secondary poverty being defined as earnings insufficient for maintenance of mere physical efficiency if any portion is absorbed in any other expenditure) and is therefore underfed (a) in childhood, when his constitution is being built up, (b) in early middle life, (c) in old age. Women are in poverty during the greater part of the period that they are bearing children.'<sup>2</sup> 'The chief cause of deaths from debility, atrophy, and premature births are to be found in the evil environment and

<sup>1</sup> *Riches and Poverty*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Poverty*, ch. v.

malnutrition of the mother during pregnancy.’<sup>1</sup> ‘It is probable that of the 1,200,000 births per annum, as many as 300,000 are in necessitous families. We cannot afford to allow 300,000 children to be starved before and after birth every year.’<sup>2</sup> Of the other direct effects of these economic facts much may be said and much has been said. I shall only add that it is simply academic nonsense for us to lament the deficiencies of our own productions in comparison with the sculpture of Greece, the law of Rome, the architecture of the Middle Ages, or the literature of the Renaissance, while under our noses is the fact that we are hampered by a mass of incompetence—incompetence which is not due to birth or lack of brains or virtue, but simply to partial starvation.<sup>3</sup> Not that in the stress of material need we should forget the deeper and more humane interests of art and knowledge, but we must begin at the beginning; and we can hardly expect a higher civilization until a greater proportion have attained the bare requisites of human life.

#### **The Individualist Ideal and Exceptional Ability.**

I turn now to the two great ideals which express our modern conception of how this human life is to be attained; and, first, of Individualism. I propose to state as a beginning, vaguely, what is implied in the ideal so called. It may roughly be distinguished from Socialism as being chiefly concerned with the

<sup>1</sup> *Riches and Poverty*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Rowntree (*Poverty*, ch. vii, *in fine*) shows how, even if we set aside the physical and mental suffering of the present condition of workers, malnutrition is speedily destroying even their efficiency as workers.



full development of each individual considered separately. I shall afterwards proceed to say what the first clear statements of Individualism were, and to criticize what seem to be the limitations of this ideal.

There is no one who thinks at all who does not admit that the opportunities for the full development of capacity are very limited in the case of vast numbers. But every one is born with a certain amount of ability, either for making roads or for making poetry. To develop that ability is perhaps possible for a very few, or at least it seems so; and for the vast majority there is no hope. An occasional genius will be combined with a strength of character which will make it possible for a poor man to do what he feels he can do best, but the vast majority are soon levelled down to inarticulate copies of an hypothetical 'average' man by the bare necessity for food and clothing. Thus 'individuality' becomes less and less common as we move forward; and the Individualist may very well doubt if 'progress' exists when all are becoming nonentities.

It is not, however, a question of charitable feelings for the limited circumstances of our neighbours: for one may argue that in the present state of society too few are able to develop all that is in them. This is at first sight an exaggeration, since many have wealth and freedom and abundant opportunities for many experiments. It might be urged that these at least can develop their capacities to the full.

Since every one nowadays pays at least a lip-service to democracy, it would be dangerous to attempt to justify the evils of a social system on

the ground that after all the system did allow a few to reach their fullest development. Yet even this has been attempted by the followers of Nietzsche. 'The much too many', among whom, I suppose, are included all who cannot agree with their master, exist only for the sake of the 'blonde beasts' who are supermen.

But if the Nietzschean ideal only means that the type of individual we conceive to be 'best' to-day ought to be bettered and probably will be bettered; and, further, if it means that the beginning of improvement is always in a small group and not in humanity at large, then I see no objection to regarding this as a reasonable, if exaggerated, form of Individualism. Man is indeed 'a bridge and not a goal'. The future may develop a race as far superior to us as, we hope, we are superior to the anthropoid apes. And it is true that progress is always made first by a small group which leavens the lump. In science, in art, and even in the use of appliances for ordinary life, a few discover and use what afterwards may become a universal possession.

Individualism, therefore, is perfectly right in insisting that exceptional ability should be given its chance. To hold back the few because the many cannot keep up with them would be a policy detrimental even to the many; and this is no abstract and unreal possibility, for continually the man of ability in a Trade Union, for example, is prevented from progress on the ground that those who have not such ability would be ousted in the struggle for employment.<sup>1</sup> I am not here concerned with the

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 552, &c., the criterion of a 'bad workman' is different for a master and for an organizer of a trade union.

right of the majority of workmen to consider their own prospects. That is a further question. It remains in any case clear that no society can progress if the exceptionally gifted are always being levelled down to the average mediocrity. The cult of incompetence is sufficiently common nowadays for us to feel that something needs to be said as to the gain for the whole community in the full development of the exceptional few. No one<sup>1</sup> maintains that the weaklings should be unprotected; but that is one thing, and the deliberate support of incompetence at the expense of ability is another. We have special opportunities for the mentally deficient, and few advantages are given to the exceptionally able. It might be maintained that these were able to look after themselves and, I suppose, extreme individualism would imply that they can, but unfortunately they are not left to themselves. They are forced by circumstances to sit at office stools or to dig coal, when they might be advancing science or art. Nor is it reasonable to fling a child into the midst of an elaborately organized society and to suppose that the child is absolutely free to make use of all that is best in him.

Thus Individualism is an ideal, and not a mere complacent regard for the present structure of society. It implies that something must be done to give more opportunity for the full development of every citizen. It is an appeal in the first place, in the interests of the whole community, for special consideration for the exceptional. It is a protest

<sup>1</sup> Except perhaps Nietzscheans, who are not able to realize that they would be the first to disappear if their criterion of value were accepted.

against the modern tendency towards mediocrity and assimilation: for the fact that we all tend more and more to dress alike is a sign that we are all tending to think and to act alike. But Democracy, if it is opposed to Plutocracy or the Aristocracy of birth, cannot be opposed to an Aristocracy of intelligence. Indeed, the whole race grows in the development of its exceptional men. Thus even with respect to the few, the present social structure seems to demand more individual variety; and the few who by wealth or birth are able to develop themselves are but a fraction of those who are born exceptional.

#### **Individualism and the Claim of the Weak against the Strong.**

With a wider outlook, nevertheless, we must admit that, in a society where the greater number cannot develop their real capacities, no one can effectively develop his own. Nor is there any paradox in this. For those who seem by wealth and position to have every opportunity of self-development are really, but subtly prevented: the near contact with others who have few or no such opportunities limits the opportunities even of these few; and if these shut themselves off from all such contact, they at once cut off half of their own opportunities. The chief basis for the self-development of a human being is social contact with others; and the development of one is dependent on the development of those with whom he is in contact. Therefore a society in which a few are fully developed is a contradiction in terms. The under-development even of a few will permeate and obstruct the development of all the others of the same group. The under-

development of that group will affect the development of other groups, and so from a small evil the whole race will be affected. This sounds fantastic until it is applied to concrete examples. Let us, therefore, see what the effect is of the fact that a large percentage of 'civilized' human beings are without security of food and clothing. They are continually in ill health or are compelled to die prematurely: their children are worse. They are preoccupied with the brute needs of the savage, and have neither time nor opportunity for anything which we may regard as civilized interests. Their physical weakness makes their work ineffective and unintelligent; the work badly done affects even the most securely well-fed millionaire or the most unworldly artist. It limits, therefore, the opportunities even of the few who have what are called 'advantages'; and the continual contact with the undeveloped makes it necessary even for the intelligent to come down from their heights in order barely to be understood. Groups of men thus permeated by under-development are always kept at the intellectual level of savages when it is a question of rivalry between their group and any others. That is to say, the only rivalry they can conceive is that of brute strength or such low cunning as may outwit their neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

Now if we go further and observe that such under-development tends to increase,<sup>2</sup> we shall see

<sup>1</sup> This is one, at least, of the fundamental causes of warfare. No rivalry is appreciated by the uncivilized except that of brute force; but the majority in most 'civilized' nations are not able to devote their attention to anything more than the acquisition of food and clothing.

<sup>2</sup> This would be proved by considering the effect on the children of the under-development of the parents,

that here is no problem for charity. We need something more radical. Prevention, not cure, is what we must plan, for the disease we may cure by charity has already produced a thousand new diseases and the process goes on too quickly for any doctoring of the social sores. Unless, then, we discover some means of preventing this underdevelopment, the whole structure of our present society will decay, as a dying body does.

Individualism, in demanding, first, the free opportunity for full development of every member of the group, has with it all the best thought of our time. Contrasted as it may seem to be with Socialism, the ideal implied in both is at least in this the same : both desire a fuller development of all men. Such is the common ideal as it at present exists ; and on the side of Individualism which is to be contrasted with Socialism it implies that our guiding conception must be the producing of more and more competent, free, and fully developed individuals. This in all Individualism, even in its more limited modern forms, further implies that every sane adult is the best judge of his own interest, and that the common welfare is best attained by the intelligent pursuit by each of his own interest.

### **History of Individualism.**

The history of this ideal is comparatively short, for although in a sense it is implied in ancient Athens and in the Renaissance gospel of self-development, it has acquired its present characteristics practically since the beginning of the not only through their physical inefficiency, but through their intellectual incompetence.

nineteenth century. In spite of the proved incompetence of all governments during the period preceding the French Revolution, a pathetic faith survived in the possibility of a perfect government. 'The Rights of Man' were its basis and 'the people' its only embodiment. But, quite unexpected by the philosophers, there came the Industrial Revolution which destroyed the last remnants of the mediaeval caste system. Markets became larger as communication became more easy; and this again produced the factory system, in which vast numbers of men, women, and children worked at machines, and with capital not owned by themselves.

This is not the place to describe in detail the transformation of life that resulted from the new Industrialism. It is sufficiently clear that new wants were felt, since the situation of vast numbers was wholly new; and every want was opposed by the weight of an absolute governmental tradition.<sup>1</sup>

The deeper wants of the multitude were as yet inarticulate, and a school of interpreters arose who said that the one necessity was complete freedom for the individual. It is true that for these economists the individual mentioned was the mill-owner, who felt himself hampered by the remnants of an old tradition: and the result was a gospel of 'laissez-faire' in which the proved incompetence of past government was used as a reason for the strict limitation of all government.

<sup>1</sup> Then in England feudalism survived, for example, in Leeds in 1839, when the city had to pay £13,000 for permission *not* to grind its corn in the mill of the lord of the manor.

The conception guiding the policy of 'laissez-faire',<sup>1</sup> however, was by no means irrational, and no one ever supposed that all regulation would be avoided. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the real interest of the community will be best attained by the intelligent pursuit by each of his own interest; at least it is just as reasonable as to suppose that the real interest of each will best be attained through the direction by some one else of the business of each.

The extreme 'orthodox' economists did nevertheless exaggerate the policy of trusting to nature. The general tendency to a childlike belief in the 'survival of the fittest' and 'natural selection'—a belief as childlike as the older trust in Providence—led to the adoration of natural processes. Men were told to leave Nature to itself, and they soon discovered that the standards apparently adopted by this very unethic and brutish nature were not such as a civilized man could accept. Even the physical scientists discovered that what nature produced might not be morally good.

The general reaction against the adoration of natural processes and the cult of brute strength or low cunning was in part the result, in part the cause of the perception that all was not going well in the new industrial system. Sentimentalists like Ruskin may have exaggerated social evils;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Defined by Sidgwick, *El. Pol.*, p. 137, as the rule of 'letting people manage their affairs in their own way, so long as they do not cause mischief to others without the consent of others'.

<sup>2</sup> Clearly there is no harm in factory chimneys or railways, although they seemed to be connected with the poverty and mediocrity of life which Ruskin reasonably attacked.



but there was evidence enough that 'laissez-faire' would soon fling civilization back into the brute struggle for food. A genius who was physically weak might be rejected by nature; but Man could not afford to watch passively while such a genius was destroyed: and this was but an extreme case of what was happening in the middle of the nineteenth century. So on every side 'laissez-faire' began to be suspected, and reformers demanded the regulation of industry.

But even after the extreme gospel of 'laissez-faire' was exploded and it was seen that there must be some governmental restriction for the methods of manufacture, the tendency continued in the direction of suspecting governmental interference. Thus, in the language of Individualism, much more is made of the *limits* of government than of the *sphere* of government; and all government is spoken of as restricting rather than as developing the governed, so that interference is made to seem a greater danger than carelessness. As regards the individual, more seems to be said of his rights than of his duties, largely because Individualism in part inherits the conceptions of the French Revolution: and indeed Individualism grew up before the present tendency to study the group spirit or social psychology. The language of Individualism thus often creates a prejudice against it; and its classical statement in Mill or Sidgwick seems, in many instances, obsolete; the result of which is that many writers on social and political issues to-day treat the ideal itself as obsolete.<sup>1</sup> But I think that we

<sup>1</sup> This, I confess, seems to me to be the case in the otherwise admirable rendering of Spencer and Mill in Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*; not sufficient

may allow for the deficiencies in the statement of the ideal by its earlier advocates, and, setting aside criticism for the present, we may attempt to understand that conception of Individualism which is still effective.

Perhaps also it is not beside the point here to remark that the tendency to oppose our immediate predecessors has led recent writers into the opposite exaggeration of underrating the value of the individual in political thought and action. It is true enough that no individual is 'atomic'—none completely cut off from his fellows—and that the absolute individual is an abstraction. But Mill himself knew that. On the other hand, it is dangerous to speak as though the individual were in any sense unreal or ineffective by comparison with the crowd-mind, or the State, or the soul of the community.<sup>1</sup> The individual remains a fundamental reality, as separate, in some sense, from every other: and the State is a company of individuals, perhaps as real as the individuals, but by no means *more* real.

With such preliminary warnings we may turn to consider the literature of Individualism. I think

allowance is there made for the inherited language which never quite expressed at least Mill's, if not Spencer's, Individualism. Note, for example, Mill's effort to explain how all action is really other-regarding and none is wholly self-regarding (in *Liberty*).

<sup>1</sup> Thus in Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory*, the Real Will plays the part of a sort of superhuman Deity; as happens often in the Hegelian discussion of the State in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. This seems to me quite misleading; for even though the Hegelian *says* he has kept in view the reality he has transcended, in effect he has forgotten the individual in a 'higher Unity'. This metaphysical fiction becomes pure mythology in such a writer as Le Bon.

it is not merely provincialism to imagine that the chief examples of this are to be found in English. As the Revolutionary classic is French, the Nationalist gospel Italian, and the Socialist programme German, so the first expression of Individualism is English. Spencer, Mill, and Sidgwick have each given something of universal importance to the tradition of political ideals in Western civilization.

### Literature of Individualism. Herbert Spencer.

The most striking expression of Spencer's individualism is in an article on 'Specialized Administration', published in 1871.<sup>1</sup> It is a reply to Huxley's objection that 'the body physiological' would decay if each cell were left free to follow its own interests. Spencer replies that he is not an anarchist, but holds that 'within its proper limits governmental action is not simply legitimate, but all-important'.<sup>2</sup> Conflicting interests are to be 'balanced' by government in 'the preventing of aggression'. Huxley's metaphor is shown not to involve that the interest of the separate cells is in any way *opposed* to the common interest of all,<sup>3</sup> but rather the contrary. And it is shown by historical examples that State regulation has kept back banking and other industrial developments. Also Spencer truly says that no credit is given by the opponents of Individualism to the natural effects of fellow feeling or social altruism. These also would naturally limit selfishness without any

<sup>1</sup> In the *Fortnightly Review*, December 1871, and in *Essays*, vol. iii, p. 401.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 417, and he refers to 'the Duty of the State' in his *Social Statics*, ch. xxi, and in his *Essay on 'Over Legislation'*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421.

special governmental interference: but government remains essential for 'negatively regulative control'.

The ideal, therefore, is a state of society in which individuals are left as much as possible to their natural reasoning and feelings, these being conceived to promote the general interest of all wherever each is a civilized and sane adult. But Spencer affected the progress of Individualism even more by his scientific than by his ethical judgement. He not only said that the decrease of government ought to occur, but that it actually did occur.<sup>1</sup> He said that history showed the gradual decrease of governmental interference from the primitive, through the 'militant' to the 'industrial' organization of society. If, as in extreme forms of Socialism, individuals are 'under regulation', prevented from competing and compelled to co-operate, there is no industrial organization but only a continuance of the more primitive militant type.<sup>2</sup> But the latest developed society is that with 'a relatively narrow range of public organizations and a relatively wide range of private organizations'.<sup>3</sup> Plasticity and economic autonomy are the results. Contract takes the place of status, and peace that of war. The individuals are more

<sup>1</sup> Of course Spencer, like all evolutionists, cannot avoid calling historical change (a scientific fact) by the name of 'progress', which implies an Ethical judgement; and so he was practically influenced in his view of what *had* occurred by his judgement as to what *ought* to occur. But even his history is defective. The province of government has changed, but it has not been restricted; and again, the province of government is even more *directive* and less merely 'regulative' than it has been.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Institutions*, p. 604, edit. 1885.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 613.

various in kind <sup>1</sup> and, despite the defects, such have been *in fact* the results of the new organization which has in Western Europe taken the place of mediaeval militancy. 'The limitation of State functions is one outcome of that process of specialization of functions which accompanies organic and super-organic evolution at large.'<sup>2</sup> Thus, as Marx proved not only that Socialism *should* come, but that it *must* come, so Spencer proved that the exact opposite—Individualism—not only ought to be established but *must* in the natural course of evolution be established.

Each school pointed to historical facts as supporting their conception of progress and their ideal. The Hegelian Absolute was made to countenance Socialism, while Darwinian Evolution gained credit for Individualism.

#### Literature of Individualism. J. S. Mill.

Perhaps, however, the most splendid statement of the ideal is to be found in Mill's *Liberty*.<sup>3</sup> There it is said that with respect to actions having no *direct* influence on others the individual needs (1) liberty of thought and expression, (2) liberty of pursuits and tastes (i.e. to do what he likes), and (3) liberty of combination. 'The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 639.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 659. This is obviously false. State functions have not been progressively limited, but have increased. Spencer did not see that the activity of the individual could increase and *at the same time* the activity of society, since he falsely supposed that one excluded the other. For a complete refutation of Spencer's history, cf. Durkheim, *Div. de Travail social*, p. 180 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Published in 1859.

in our own way so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it.’<sup>1</sup> Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest. The purpose of such freedom is, of course, the complete development of the capacities of each.

But, we may argue, the individual may not know what is good for him. Mill replies by asking whether any one is likely to know better: if the individual is ignorant, the society of his time is not likely to know much more.<sup>2</sup> ‘It is hard’, says Mill, ‘to get a boot to fit a foot; how much harder it would be to discover a kind of Government which would suit the individuals concerned.’ Next, the individual has more evidence as to his own case than any one else, and again therefore he is better able to judge what is good for him.<sup>3</sup> But finally and fatally the principle that some one else knows what is good for the individual destroys the variety and originality which is the life-blood of the State. There is no explaining to the unoriginal what value that may have, for, as Mill says, ‘if the mass could see what originality could do for them, it would not be originality’. And consider the opposite danger to that we might risk in allowing the individual to decide his own case. We might indeed attain improvement, but ‘the spirit of improvement is not always a spirit of liberty, for it may aim at forcing

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., *Introd.*

<sup>2</sup> The assumption of some Socialists (e. g. Mr. Sidney Webb) that ‘the State’ would know best, is hardly proved by history, nor is it indicated by recent legislation. The passage referred to in Mill is in ch. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. iv, *init.*

improvements on an unwilling people. . . . The only unfailing and permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many independent centres of improvement as there are individuals.'<sup>1</sup> The consequence would be that by increasing the support and sustenance rendered by Government to individuals all would be weakened. Treat a man as an invalid and you make him one: suppose he does not know what is best for him and you make it impossible for him ever to discover.

Has society, then, no power of guidance over the individual? Mill says not in the case of a sane adult. Society must exert itself in educating; education should be enforced but not provided:<sup>2</sup> and 'if society lets any considerable number of its members grow up mere children, incapable of being acted upon by rational consideration of distant motives, society has itself to blame for the consequences'. The sane adult is to be supposed to be able to judge what is best for himself. The guiding conception is clear. It is a protest against the modern tendency to assimilation of all men, which really involves the levelling down of all originality and the State maintenance of incompetent mediocrity. The faith of the Individualist implies that men are not as bad as they have been painted, and that they do not need to be constantly worried to do right or to help each other. The tendency to exalt the sphere of government 'con-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, *in fine*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. v. A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; but one system might be maintained by the State as a sort of model to the many voluntary institutions.

verts the active and ambitious into hangers-on of the government'<sup>1</sup> and dwarfs the whole population by depriving most of power. The State should rather aim at a decentralization and dissemination of power, while a central bureau of information should deprovincialize by educating or instructing (but not governing) the local authorities. Thus Mill is influenced by the ultimate ideal of a community of individuals each having real governmental power and all sharing the best knowledge of the time. Power can only be shared, he thinks, by being decentralized and knowledge can only be shared by being centralized. The end will be the fullest possible development of all the faculties of all the individuals in the community.

#### Literature of Individualism. H. Sidgwick.

A more complete rendering of Individualism is given in Sidgwick's *Elements of Politics*.<sup>2</sup> He begins by speaking of 'the individualistic minimum of governmental interference' which for sane adults implies the maintenance (1) of personal security, (2) of private property, (3) of fulfilment of contracts. The statements which follow are of interest chiefly because the possible objections against Individualism are considered; and a further expression is given of the underlying conception of the self-development of each in a civilized state. In a sense Sidgwick's Individualism is limited, but it might also be said that this was the true modern form of the old doctrine. An example of the development is to be found in the treatment of

<sup>1</sup> Ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. iv-viii. The book was published in 1891.



property. Although private property in land (i. e. the right to exclusive and permanent use) is regarded as closely connected with Individualism, no objection is made to the *principle* of 'Land Nationalization'. 'It must be admitted that private property in land involves a substantial encroachment on the opportunities of applying labour productively which, were it not for such appropriation, would be open to individuals now landless. On the other hand, appropriation at least for a term of years<sup>1</sup> is required, on the principle of utilitarian Individualism, to stimulate and reward the most energetic and enlightened application of labour to land.' In these circumstances 'the only practicable application of the individualistic principle is to allow appropriation but to secure adequate compensation for the encroachment involved in it'. He goes on to say that if a better bargain for the community can be made by letting and not selling the land, Individualism would support letting.<sup>2</sup> Such a rendering of Individualism clearly involves the departure from the atomic individual with a fringe of rights. The social interest of every individual is frankly recognized.

The details of Sidgwick's conception cannot be discussed here, since my purpose is simply to discover the guiding ideal. This still remains individualistic, although he speaks of the necessity of socialistic interference.<sup>3</sup> 'That the common

<sup>1</sup> Not necessarily for life.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements*, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *El. Pol.*, ch. x. Socialistic as compared with 'Parental Interference', by which an individual is coerced in his own interest.

welfare is likely to be best promoted by individuals promoting their private interest intelligently' remains nevertheless 'to a great extent true'.<sup>1</sup> Thus he rejects 'all large schemes for reconstructing social order on some other than its present individualistic basis'. The uses of socialistic interference, or the coercion of individuals for the good of the community<sup>2</sup> are in regulating and even owning means of communication (railway, post office, &c.), fundamental utilities (water, land, &c.), and in the correction of the tendency of wealth to accumulate in the hands of the few. The State must even directly spend money in behalf of the poorer classes 'to secure efficiency and mobility of labour' or 'to bring within reach of all some share of culture'; 'and in so far as this is done without such heavy taxation as materially diminishes the stimulus to industry and thrift of the person taxed, this expenditure of public money, however justly it may be called socialistic, appears to me defensible on the grounds of individualistic theory as the best method of approximating to the ideal of individualistic justice'.<sup>3</sup>

### French and Russian Anarchism.

But in a more extreme form, in spite of the development of Socialism, and in spite of valid objections to its older form, Individualism continues as an ideal. As such it holds up for the goal of action

<sup>1</sup> *El. Pol.*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Distinguished from *Socialism* (p. 147), which is supposed by Sidgwick to involve redistribution of wealth, or common ownership (p. 151), and which would involve weakening of energy and vigilance (p. 152).

<sup>3</sup> *El. Pol.*, p. 156.

a community of free and fully developed human beings who need less external regulation in proportion as each intelligently directs his own conduct. And this seems to imply as a still further ideal a state of society in which no external regulation at all is necessary. There have been some writers who have expressed even this view. Anarchism, as it is called, deserves to be considered as a political factor in so far as its guiding conception is very nearly that of extreme Individualism. It is ineffective only because it disregards much too many facts in the present state of society.

Anarchism is a sort of Utopian Individualism. It is not unreasonable as an ideal, if we allow that 'an ideal is not a goal, but only a mark of direction',<sup>1</sup> for we may well imagine that the more civilized men become the less external government they will need, and the ideally civilized man is he whose desires are all directed by his intelligence so cultivated that he can judge the true value of his actions. Thus Rabelais' *Abbey of Thelema* had as a motto, 'Fais ce que voudras'. Men who are free desire what is right. And if the same freedom were possible for all, that would be Anarchism. The strangest misrepresentation of this ideal is that which, for controversial purposes, implies that the philosophical anarchist is disorderly.<sup>2</sup> The true conception of Anarchism implies the faith that if men were left

<sup>1</sup> Karl Pearson, *Grammar of Science*.

<sup>2</sup> This is due, of course, to the pernicious misrepresentation of morality which poses as 'moral instruction', according to which what it is right to do is necessarily disagreeable. External force is, therefore, foolishly conceived as the only safeguard of order and not internal rationality.

alone they each would keep out of the other's way. Proudhon was the first to attack the conventional idea of government.<sup>1</sup> He asserted that the aim of government is to make men able to do without government; the individual with perfect self-control would need no constraint, but would be perfectly free. Bakunin next<sup>2</sup> elaborated the basis of Anarchism in the conception that all would be well if each man knew the law of nature and of human nature, and lived in accordance with that. The means he suggested gave colour to the popular view of an anarchist, since he held that a violent attack and the destruction of all present government would result in the free arrangement of men according to nature and without internal regulation.

Prince Kropotkin developed further the same theory in a generous, if fantastic, vision of the direction in which civilization is moving.<sup>3</sup> The popular conception of Darwinism implies a continual hostility between individuals; but in 'Mutual Aid' Kropotkin showed that the tendency of individuals is towards friendship and association.

<sup>1</sup> His saying, 'Property is theft' has become trite. He first used the word 'Anarchism' as the name for an ideal. His greatest power was exercised during the revolutionary period about the year 1848. Anarchism is close to Socialism in advocating the common possession of all land. It is to be contrasted with it on the question of organization.

<sup>2</sup> Bakunin (1814-76) was active in the German Revolution of 1848. He suffered many years' imprisonment, and, although in theory a Socialist, opposed Karl Marx in the *International*.

<sup>3</sup> After arrest in 1874 he escaped from Russia in 1876. At Lyons, in the famous Anarchist trial of 1883, he was condemned to five years' imprisonment.

Thus anarchist faith in human nature is very great, and perhaps it is not more difficult to prove reasonable than any other faith.

It will be seen that although Individualism as a political ideal is in great part English, its Utopian form is French and Russian. Psychologically it may be easily understood that all forms of government must seem terrible to Russians, and the French have often produced, as in the case of Rousseau, violent protests against their political tendency to bureaucracy and centralization of power. Anarchism, however, does not need any detailed criticism here, since it is not an ideal which is politically very effective at present and it seems to the majority wildly impracticable.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore turn our attention to the deficiencies of even the practical forms of Individualism.

### Criticism of Individualist Ideals.

In criticism of the whole tendency, one may urge that as an ideal Individualism involves the neglect of the social causes and social results of action. Of these we shall speak in the following chapter, for Socialism is in part an attempt to correct this mistake. There is always a natural impulse to

<sup>1</sup> I mean to the thinking majority. I do not count the majority who shudder at the name 'Anarchist' or 'Atheist', for shuddering is a substitute for thought.

That the progress of civilization, although it involves a growth of free individuals, does *not* therefore involve a lessening of law or of the power of society, is obvious. Thus the 'scientific' hypothesis of some anarchists is nonsense in so far as they seem to imply that the more individuality there is the less law. Cf. Durkheim, *Div. de Travail social*, p. 183.

look after one's interests, and although sentimentalism may indeed exaggerate our duty to our neighbour, nevertheless, in an ideal to be worked for, there is more need to emphasize the social effect of our action than the effect upon ourselves. If, therefore, an ideal is to be a correction of a pernicious tendency, and the present tendency is towards selfishness and an unenlightened egoism, Individualism should be opposed as giving strength to the very evil which needs most to be eradicated. Indeed, the Individualistic writers, like Mill and Sidgwick, do not really understand the egoism of the average man; their own egoism is so enlightened, their action is so intelligently governed, that they may indeed do good to the community by pursuing what *they* know to be their own higher interest. But, as in the case of Socrates, a personal characteristic cannot be made a rule of morality. For Socrates, if he knew what was good, there was no hesitation in doing it; and so for the ideal individualist there is no exclusion of the interest of others in thinking of his own. But the majority have no such wide views, and we can hardly allow them to discover by bitter experience (generally the bitter experience of others) that their own good is best achieved by aiming at that of others. This objection to Individualism therefore implies not that it is wrong, but that it is inadequate as an ideal for the present needs of a semi-civilized community.

Again, Individualism suffers from the 'atomism' of the philosophy of the early nineteenth century. The individual is not a separate atom surrounded by a hedge of rights. In fact all the rights of the individual are dependent upon his duties; and the exaggerations of the French Revolution as to

the 'rights of man' are misleading.<sup>1</sup> No modern individualist, of course, would deny the social relations of every individual; but even with this proviso, Individualism suffers from the unconscious metaphor of atoms. It is often supposed, even when it is not expressly stated, that we can treat the State as a mere collection of individuals. The illustration at the beginning of Hobbes's *Leviathan* is typical, since the monstrous State is there drawn as a collection of diminutive citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Not that the individual should disappear; but the State or the group must be thought of as an organic whole and not an arbitrary coming together of consenting individuals. The individual, whether he wills it or not, belongs to a natural association through his family, which he may call his nation. He has, that is to say, a character which is given all its meaning and value by the tradition into which he is born; and even if he may transfer his allegiance he cannot change his blood. The atomic individual, without race, relatives, or tradition, is an obsolete abstraction of the eighteenth century, which survived into the nineteenth century only because of the extreme fear of grandmotherly supervision. But since the criticism of this deficiency of Individualism is involved in the arguments we shall have to consider for Socialism, I need not pursue the matter further here.

<sup>1</sup> Cf Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*. In this book will be found an admirable refutation of 'atomic' Individualism, although the Hegelian State which is connected with it seems fantastic. Because no individual is isolated, it does not follow that all individuals are only constituent elements in a sort of super-mind.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. the frontispiece to the Cambridge edition.

The same must be said of the other objection to Individualism, that the free competition which allows free combination turns into its economic opposite 'Monopoly'.<sup>1</sup> There is some ground for the socialistic contention that Individualism has led directly to Trusts and 'big businesses', and that a system which produces such evils is beyond cure and should be abolished. The usual opposition is, however, exaggerated, and I can only see that Individualism is mistaken or limited in giving support to the tendency which really abolishes the free and fully developed individuals who are conceived by the Individualists themselves to be the ideal. The Individualist conception of free competition seems indeed to be mistaken.

#### Result.

It remains only to be said that Individualism as an ideal has a very great future. Its limitations and mistakes of the past are obvious enough, but it has survived them. The individualist Economists and utilitarian philosophers who advocated free contract and unrestricted competition were really maintaining the very system which was extinguishing individuality. Here is certainly one of the comedies of history. The advocates of individuality were hard at work in the effort to make utterly impossible the realization of the ideal they advocated. And to this day Individualism suffers from its unfortunate and mistaken advocates of the early nineteenth century, and it can obtain little credit as an ideal because of the means with which

<sup>1</sup> Sidgwick, *El. Pol.*, p. 582 (ed. 1897). He calls this 'the most deep-seated weakness and most formidable danger' of Individualism.



this ideal was foolishly connected. Its fear of Law and Government was due to a mistaken theory in Political Economy. There are other and more far-reaching restrictions than the restrictions of Law. If the restriction of Law is removed, the restrictions involved in the very structure of society become all the more powerful ; and indeed the socialist might argue that Law is a removal of natural restrictions, not the addition of more. For he who is born under-fed, lives ill-clothed and with no capital behind him, is very much restricted. His opportunities for 'free competition' and 'free contract' are absolutely non-existent. What sort of freedom of contract has one who must make a contract or die of starvation ?

To do full justice to Individualism, therefore, we must separate its soul from the accidental form in which it was first embodied ; and we must see, in a dream of the future, the civilized State, an association of individuals as far more developed than the best of us now as these are better than the primitive barbarians, our ancestors. 'The worth of a State in the long run is the worth of the individuals composing it ; and a State which postpones the interests of their mental expansion and elevation to a little more of administrative skill . . . a State which dwarfs its men in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mill, *Liberty*, in fine.

# CHAPTER XI

## SOCIALISM

### **Preliminary Remarks.**

It is of an ideal that I propose to speak. Not the programme of any Socialist party but the conceptions that lie behind all such programmes are my present subject. For just as it is possible to distinguish Mohammedanism from Christianity without discussing the details of the two creeds, so it seems to me possible to consider the Socialist attitude of mind without a complete statement of the programmes implied in that attitude. The life which men conceive as desirable may be discussed not altogether indeed without reference to their method of attaining it but without attending chiefly to such methods.

We are to consider therefore the end—the situation which is desired, not the means which may be taken to arrive at it. We are to find this as an inspiration moving present-day politicians, and then to say, if we can, how it has arisen.

But first Socialism does not usually contain any reference to the relation of groups : in fact, as we shall see, one of its weaknesses is its tendency to treat individuals of entirely different groups as more similar than they are. For the discussion of the relations between one Englishman and another is treated as equivalent to a discussion of the relations between one Frenchman and another ; that

is to say, the character of the groups which we call States or nations is neglected. It is, however, quite legitimate to neglect this character for special purposes : for such purposes we may neglect the fact that this individual is an Englishman and consider him only as a man. That there is some common element in the inhabitants of all nations we must allow ; and for our present purpose we deal with that. It is of man then in his relation to his fellow man that Socialism first speaks.

This for my present argument involves that we are not to discuss the relation of group to group, but we are to consider only the relation of members of any group to one another. I do not wish to say 'the relation of man to man', because, although I abstract from the facts of nationality, I do not wish to forget that groups exist and that there is really no man who is only a man without being an Englishman, a Frenchman, or of some other race. An abstraction is misleading only if it is unconscious : I use an abstraction, but I propose that it should be always consciously regarded as such. With that proviso it is possible to discuss the Socialist ideal of the relations between man and man, and to neglect at first the objections which may be made to speaking of economic relations or those of social caste without reference to the immense importance of groups whether national, regional, or simply domestic.

#### **The Ideal : General features.**

This then is the tendency in modern political thought which we may count socialistic. It is said that we are under-developed on our social side, that we incline to think much more of the

consequences of our action upon ourselves than of the consequences upon others. But of course only a sentimentalist would suppose that others are any more important than ourselves or that we should not think of our own individual interests. Allowing therefore that there is no real distinction between true egoism and true altruism, and that the distinction of acts as self-regarding or other-regarding is almost valueless, let us suppose that it would do no great harm to-day if more people did think of the social consequences of their action.<sup>1</sup>

Now I take it that the situation desired by the Socialist is one in which this attitude has become common, in which each member of the group feels himself to be part of a whole, not in exceptional fits of sympathy for the poor or pride in his country, but naturally and normally. We are accustomed at times to pride ourselves on the achievements of our countrymen or to feel the distresses of our neighbours, and at other times we slip back into our narrow reckoning of private pains and pleasures. But it is surely not too much to hope that the sense of solidarity should increase, whether the group to which we belong be considered to be the whole human race (as it was for the great Socialists) or the small group of which the average man is aware. And a society in which this social sense was more highly developed would undoubtedly be very different from ours in its organization and in

<sup>1</sup> Obviously I cannot discuss the meaning of altruism in this place, but I wish it to be clear that although Socialism may be found in a modern sentiment towards social interests, it is not fair to connect Socialism with modern 'sentimentalism'. Unfortunately professed Socialists of the academic type tend to sandals and long hair and the improvement of their unoffending neighbours.

its freedom for the majority of individuals. In the developed social sense then is to be found the ultimate ideal of Socialism and not in any special organization which would be the result of this sense.

It may seem strange that I should find the socialistic ideal in a sentiment so obviously common to many who are not professed Socialists and not in the programme of any Socialist party; but in the first place I am now concerned with the most general influence of the ideal in present politics, and, next, I wish to contrast the ultimate ideal with the means suggested for attaining it. I know very well that the socialistic ideal is generally considered to be a sort of mechanical Utopia in which every man has been given a number and registered by his thumb-mark in exchange for having sold his soul to the State.<sup>1</sup> But even in new worlds so obviously deficient in the interest of the old the real moving conception, the ideal, is a state of society in which the social sense will be real and rational, powerful and instructed. Such an ideal may be vaguely approved by many who are not Socialists, but it is to the great Socialists of the past that we owe its present power, and only in the programme of professed Socialism do we find it clearly and frankly embodied. The ideal then involves a new state of society in which the individual shall feel and know himself to be part of an organic whole.

This involves a statement, the truth of which I shall take for granted, that the results of action even on one's self are really to be put to the credit not only of the agent but of the whole group. So

<sup>1</sup> The reference is obvious, but of course I do not accuse Mr. Wells of ever having confused the manufacture of an organization with the creation of a social soul.

that we must not be misled by sentimentality as to the 'results of honest labour' or 'the rewards of individual genius'. As action has social effects, so results have social causes. The credit for earning a large income should not rest merely with the individual financier, but with the circumstances which make such earning possible; and this is only an abstract method of saying that the credit is due in part to the other individuals of the same group. The labour of the millions of poor has literally made it possible for the few to be rich not only by direct work in the production of wealth, but also in the continuous peace which alone makes it possible for the financier or the merchant to exercise his ability. I do not wish to maintain here that a larger reward is due to those whose labour has produced the wealth in any group; for my present purpose it is sufficient to acknowledge that the united labour of the group makes wealth and no individual is an isolated cause of such wealth. Two fundamental facts are therefore implied in Socialism. Action has social results, and results (individual wealth or well-being) have social causes; but if these facts are considered, the aspiration which we may call socialistic is that such social results and causes should be made more conscious and developed. Action, it is said, should have more and better social results than it has; and more credit should be given to the social causes of any increase in wealth or well-being. Men are not isolated in working: the result of work is as much due to the many who produce as to the few who direct;<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> All through I am taking it for granted that no benefit should accrue to those who do nothing either for organization or production; but I am unwilling to say of any one

just as we cannot count precisely the value of the individual's pull when many are moving a large weight which could not be moved if each pulled singly, so we cannot fairly distribute the results of social labour by reference to the separate intelligence or strength of each.

Such, in general terms, is the ideal which is at present modifying political action—an ideal which really governs many who would by no means call themselves Socialists. Our problem now is to discover more meaning in this ideal by tracing its early development.<sup>1</sup>

#### Historical Origin of the Ideal.

One of the direct causes of Socialism was the increase of communication between different nations. As soon as it was possible to disregard, even for trade purposes, the rivalry of the groups to which two individuals belonged, as soon, that is, as an individual was really able to treat with individual across national boundaries, comparisons began to be made.<sup>2</sup> Literature completed what trade had begun and people began to compare the situation in other countries with that in their own. The result was the emergence of *the consciousness of class*.

that he or she does absolutely nothing for the whole State. The socialist criterion of 'useful work' is often very crude. To be ornamental may be useful, and some expend much labour on this.

<sup>1</sup> It is fortunately not necessary for me to trace the events or the literature in detail, since this has been admirably done in Thomas Kirkup's *History of Socialism* (publ. by A. & C. Black, 1900).

<sup>2</sup> The visit of French workmen to the London Exhibition of 1862 was a direct cause of the formation of *The International*, vide sub p. 262.

But what classes were found when the comparison had been made between different nations? There were, of course, the remnants of the mediaeval caste in the landowning system: there were the distinctions of the Renaissance in the towns, where 'Society' was opposed to the 'bourgeois'. But the most obvious of all the divisions of men into groups was the division which separated those who worked with their hands from those who lived upon the manipulation or the mere inheritance of Capital. The term 'working-man' was a new invention, marking a new perception of fact. Labour was opposed to Capital in popular thought; and irrespective of national boundaries the contrast began between politics and social reform. For it seemed futile to think of liberty and order and other high-sounding words when a large percentage of the members of so-called civilized nations had not even the security of food and clothing. By contrast with Individualism, the socialist ideal involved a comparison of class with class, not of individual with individual.

The sentimental socialists of 1835 proposed the establishment of co-operation among this 'labouring' class. The name Socialism seems to have originated in that year<sup>1</sup> when Robert Owen founded the Association of all Classes in all Nations. And for some time the tendency was to organize the labourers according to a co-operative principle; the discontent expressed in Chartism being a sign meanwhile of the new feeling of the labouring class.

The discontent grew with the perception that industrial progress had brought no advantages to the class upon whom the whole of the new industry

<sup>1</sup> Holyoake, *Hist. of Co-operation*.



depended ; but as yet there was no new ideal conceived which might guide the slowly awakening proletariat. Not until the popular movements of 1848 and the appearance of literary expressions of grievance and suggested remedies was there any powerful Socialism. But the forces which went to the making of Socialism were not literary, nor even the genius of individuals. These did something, but much more was done by the silent formation among masses of wage-earners of a spirit of solidarity. It was natural that this sense of a common interest should first take the form of class rivalry ; but its positive side was not hostility to other groups so much as a strong social sentiment within one group. This needed only to be expressed in order that the new step should be made, and its expression was made in philosophical or scientific Socialism.

The scientific socialists became prominent in 1848 and the following years. During this time the influence of Karl Marx was most significant, for in his great book <sup>1</sup> he attempted to show that inevitably in the development of society the socialist ideal as he conceived it would be realized. It remained only to hasten the accomplishment of that desirable end. And in such a thesis we can see clearly the influence of the evolutionary theory expressed for history by Hegel and for science by Darwin. There was in the air, even before Darwin wrote, a new feeling as to the flexibility of social

<sup>1</sup> *Das Kapital*. The first volume was translated into English and edited by Marx's friend Engels (publ. by Swan Sonnenschein, 1887). In the introduction Engels refers to its being called 'the Bible of the Working Classes', and he says that it is an 'adequate expression of its condition and of its aspirations'.

structure. Men became conscious of the immense changes which had taken place in feudalism and industrialism, and it was felt generally that yet greater changes might establish an entirely new system of the relations of man to man. But the crude 'Darwinism' (unfairly so called) which provoked an admiration for ourselves as the ultimate results of natural selection was corrected by the ethical criterion of value always present to socialist writers. It was felt that 'Nature' could not be left to herself; that the fittest to survive in the eyes of a Nature of brute force were not the fittest in the eyes of a civilized man. Thus while admitting development, Socialism deliberately advocated a modification by human foresight of the 'natural' course of development.

It is to be noticed therefore that in all early Socialism, both the sentimental (Owen) and the scientific (Marx), the recent discovery of the wage-earning class (the proletariat) led to a conception that the ideal was a subordination of all other classes to this. Marx indeed said that the ultimate victory of this class was for the good of all and would result in the destruction of all class; but class-war had a very prominent place in the methods, and class-victory was almost the expressed ideal of the earlier Socialists.

The prominence of class-consciousness in early Socialism is most clear in the history of 'the International'. This was a society of 'working-men' founded in London in 1864, which held its first congress in 1866 at Geneva. Then it was agreed that land and the means of communication should be owned by the State and worked by associations of labourers. By co-operation the working-men

should own the machines and 'capital' should not filch from 'labour' its due reward. The further details need not concern us here, if we recognize that in the conception of labour's reward and other such there was moving a vague aspiration towards a more 'social' constitution of industry. But the 'class' conceptions were always limiting the ideal.

In spite of the vigorous work of Karl Marx in its behalf, the International did not survive 1873. Schism divided the members, some of whom were really Individualists, and until 1889 there were no international meetings, although since that date they have occurred regularly.<sup>1</sup>

The next stage was reached when it was seen that a system and not a class must be opposed. Great men like Karl Marx had always seen this; but the vast majority tended to confuse opposition to a system with hostility to a certain number of wealthy individuals.<sup>2</sup>

The gradual change in the socialist ideal came about through the perception that class-war led nowhere, and that the ultimate supervision of the whole group over the work of each was implied in any conception of co-operation as opposed to competition. Like all other ideals, that of Socialism changed as it grew, for its great founders could not foresee all the implications of what they suggested. And as it grew it branched out in many

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ramsay Macdonald, *The Socialist Movement*, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Jaurès may be taken as a type of the newer Socialism. His death at the hands of an unintelligent 'student' (August 1914) a few days before the European War is symbolic both of the misunderstanding of Socialism by the half-educated 'upper' class and of the prevailing ignorance of International (not Anti-national) ideals of Society.

different directions, in this also not being different from order or liberty ; since different ages and different groups in the same age have different immediate needs and therefore appreciate different elements in the same ideal. Thus, as it is often said, German Socialism is demanding what even 'Liberals' in England take for granted ; or again, that in the United States Socialism is demanding much more than in England. The ideals vary because the needs are different ; but the ideals are, none the less, of the same kind. It is now clear that Socialism, though still difficult to define, because it is a growing tendency, not an established creed, is quite a definitely distinguishable political phenomenon. The programme of Socialists in different countries may vary, since the evils complained of are different ; but there is a common ideal. This common ideal, in its most ultimate form and putting aside questions of organization, is that the relations of man to man should be so arranged that the results of labour may be more evenly distributed than they are at present. Or if this seems too definitely economic a statement of the ideal, we may say that it implies the fuller recognition of the common or social sources of wealth in the more social or more distributed use of wealth. Whether this should be done by centralized action of the State or by more local government or by the division of society according to trades, the ideal is the same. Thus it is not necessary for my present purpose to discuss the different methods advocated by State Socialism or by Guild Socialism or by Syndicalism. The ultimate ideal which is common to all these is a motive force to vast numbers of men and women to-day, and

these are by no means all 'proletarians' in Marx's sense of the word, nor does the ideal any longer imply an undervaluing of intellectual as opposed to manual labour.

As for the expression of the ultimate ideal of life, I do not think that the works of William Morris are still valid. In spite of their Socialism they are too vague and, in suggested details, too unpractical to be effective indications of what Socialists desire. Thus *The Dream of John Bull* and *News from Nowhere* are not so clear an expression of the socialist ideal as, for example, the speech of Pericles is of the Athenian. But Utopias are not uncommon nowadays, and it will be easy for any one to find pointed expression of the end to be aimed at in such books as Mr. Wells has produced.<sup>1</sup> Since he has so clearly and concisely expounded the ideal, I need only refer to its general features.

By contrast with our present society that desired would be much more orderly. The confusion and waste of life and labour are to be abolished, and in their place is to be an organized State system with equal opportunity for all.<sup>2</sup> It is nowhere supposed that all are equal, for opportunity is only made equal in order to discover by trial which of us are better than others. Thus the Socialist State would contain an aristocracy of intelligence. Only the competent would govern or administer, and only the competent pursue private avocations. The

<sup>1</sup> *New Worlds for Old* and *A Modern Utopia* are the best expressions of this form of the socialist ideal.

<sup>2</sup> Hence the contrast of Socialism with Individualism in giving more place to Government; in which Socialism seems to me to bear signs of its birth in Germany. In England we under-rate, in Germany they over-estimate, Government.

result would be a fairer distribution of the goods of life, because none would be hampered by the circumstances of his birth, except in so far as these might involve a natural deficiency of character or intellect.

There are obvious limitations in the conception, but I do not know if these are the limitations of Socialism itself. They may be due only to the prejudices of the writer. There is, however, a general tendency in the description of the socialist ideal by all writers to overrate the 'engineering' intellect. Those who feel the deficiencies of the present structure of society are generally those who also, by accident, overrate the value of what is called 'Science'. They are obsessed with the extent of our mechanical 'progress'. They lack perception of those more intricate and perhaps more subtle qualities which are connected with the Arts; and of course they are right to despise the dilettante sentiments of the inactive collector or patron. But I do not see why the test of competence, even for governing, should be so predominantly 'scientific'. Science has done much for men, but—I speak heresy—Art has done more; and even government is as likely to be an Art as a Science.

With this limitation of view must be connected the prejudice common to all but Fabian Socialism in favour of work done with the hands. When the 'reward of labour' is considered, very little credit is given to the intellectual labour of organizing and none at all to such labour as pure research or teaching.<sup>1</sup> The 'Fabian Essays in

<sup>1</sup> Even Mr. Dickinson seems to suffer from a sentimental over-estimation of the value of scavenging. Cf. *Justice and Liberty*.

Socialism's attempt to correct the crudities of the earlier 'Scientific' Socialism; and there has been an abundant crop of Utopias, more or less valuable, all indicating the general tendency in a desire for more real social feeling and a more effective social use of wealth.

### The Socialism of Karl Marx.

In spite of more recent literature, however, the great work of Karl Marx remains the most trenchant expression of the socialist ideal. His view of history is limited and his description of historic change is too Hegelian in its simplicity. His admiration for the Middle Ages is due to the Romanticists<sup>1</sup> and his rather crude exaggerations are admitted by his followers.<sup>2</sup> But when the worst is said, *Das Kapital* remains a book as great as most of those classics to which I have referred in former chapters as statements of ideals. He writes thus of the ultimate guiding conception: 'Let us picture a community of free individuals carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community. . . . The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. The mode of this distribution will vary with the

<sup>1</sup> This is repeated by Mr. Hyndman in his *Historical Basis of Socialism in England*. The mediaeval life there described is rather fantastic.

<sup>2</sup> This has been done in E. Bernstein's *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*. Cf. Kirkup's *History of Socialism*, p. 314.

productive organization of the Community and the degree of historical development attained by the producers.’<sup>1</sup> The greater part of the book is a statement of facts with a view to showing the evils of the existing system and also the forces which inevitably will transform this system into the ideal implied in the passage I have quoted. In the bourgeois form of society the means of production have the mastery over man. The many are expropriated,<sup>2</sup> and labourers are changed into proletarians. Capitalism next expropriates the individual capitalists: ‘one capitalist kills many’: the monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production. Labourers are taught to co-operate in factories and workshops, and at last they learn to co-operate for their own interest in revolt. ‘What the bourgeoisie produces are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable’: and in the last stage a new society will be established without class-conflict and with social action for social good.<sup>3</sup>

#### Present Statement of the Ideal.

Such in summary form is the attitude of Marx towards the ideal. In its chief features it expresses the generally accepted ideal of all present Socialists and it involves three conceptions, what is to be abolished, how it is to be abolished, and what is to be established instead. The system which must be abolished is called *Capitalism*. It is an arrangement of the relation between individuals by which

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, p. 50. English trans.

<sup>2</sup> p. 787.

<sup>3</sup> ‘This state does not re-establish private property, but gives private property based on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and means of production,’ p. 789.



a small class has almost all the wealth<sup>1</sup> derived from capital. No one, of course, proposes the abolition of capital, since that would be equivalent to abolishing men's hands in the process of improving men. Capital is a necessary, natural and, even for the extreme Socialist, an admirable force. What is opposed is Capitalism, that is, the appropriation of capital for the interests of a small class.

For the abolition of this two forces are working which should be developed: (1) the concentration of capital and the formation of 'big businesses' which are really owned socially although only by a very few; and (2) the organization of men for work together, either in the production by each of a part of a manufactured whole or simply for the voicing of the interests of a special trade. The socialistic ideal implies therefore a judgement of value as to the different tendencies in social evolution. There is a tendency towards socialization and a tendency towards more private or segregate ownerships; and the former tendency is to be maintained as progressive. Thus in the actual situation of to-day the Socialist sees the beginning of the realization of his own ideal, although he is aware that without the action of men natural forces would not inevitably bring the new society into existence.

The desirable result I have already described as a state of society in which social causes of wealth would be allowed to have social results. At present, by contrast, it may be said that these social causes having produced wealth, the wealth is segregated by mistaken and pernicious methods so

<sup>1</sup> Including, of course, under the name wealth all the resources for the higher human interests, art, travel, &c. It is thus not a purely economic issue.

as to flow only in a very limited channel, thus cramping and confusing its own course and leaving vast tracts unfertilized and desert. We may imagine a new society in which the springs would be free and the streams would be so directed that the whole land would be made more productive.

Finally, by contrast with Individualism in so far as this implies the freedom for development of each individual, the socialistic ideal involves that each shall be given every opportunity to fulfil that function for society of which he is most capable. The point of view is different ; the ultimate ideal is the same.

#### Criticism.

But however splendid the ultimate ideal, something must be said by way of criticism : for the socialistic ideal, like every other, has its limitation and it is often expressed with great crudity.

I do not deny the extremity of the evils from which the ideal of Socialism arises ; nor do I deny that the only remedy is a replacing of the whole economic political system by another. It may be that we shall be driven to such extreme measures ; but even so, the problem would still remain—what new system is better ? And that problem is not, as I think, sufficiently solved by present Socialism.

In the first place, international Socialism inherits the cosmopolitanism of the French revolutionary thinkers. It neglects too much the existence of groups. The individual is considered as having a higher or a better reality than the family or the State or the social class. But all such groups appear to be 'natural' : they are the results of natural forces directed, perhaps half-consciously, by

the ethical judgements of many generations. I do not mean, of course, that they are therefore above criticism, but I do mean that the criticism directed against them must be slightly less crude than that common among professed Socialists. The tendency towards an abstract cosmopolitanism has indeed been an obstacle to the success of socialist propaganda, and rightly; for the average man half consciously feels that he cannot neglect the existence of the group to which he belongs, even if in the last resort he has common interests with all other human beings.

Distinction of race and tradition (nationality) exists not merely by 'natural' selection but by ethical direction, and it is good that it should exist. Distinctions of law and government (states) exist in the same way, and it has been and is a gain that they should exist. So much Socialist writers at present would admit; <sup>1</sup> but I shall have further to say that the same is true of family and of social class. Not only do they exist by ethical direction in the past as well as by natural force; but it is good that they should exist. The words 'higher' and 'lower' classes are, no doubt, very crude as distinctions; but it seems to me that it is a gain that a class or groups having artistic or cultural interests should exist, even at the price of the existence of private capital with some attendant

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jaurès, *Studies in Socialism* (Socialist Library, III), p. 6. 'In the present state of humanity, where our only organization is on the basis of nationality, social property will take the form of national property.' Thus the greater Socialists did not need the war to show to them that nations were real forces; but they wrongly thought the people had risen above 'race exclusiveness' (the savage idea of nationality).

evils. How much evil and how much good is the result of any system must be the ultimate issue. No one can suppose that any one system has all the good results and any other all the bad.

Next, as against all forms of State Socialism, the variety and intricacy of the present system should not be so abruptly dismissed as evil. Confusion is indeed an obstacle to civilization, but so is an artificial simplification of the natural luxuriance of social development.<sup>1</sup> Even if such luxuriance is uneconomical, it might be worth while to pay for variety; but I do not think that local difference and a certain amount of competition has been proved even to be wasteful. It is no proof to show that waste exists, for a certain amount of co-operation also exists, and the waste might as easily be proved to be due to co-operation as it is to competition.

Further, the ideal organization of society by the mastery of the State over all the means of production seems to me to imply the existence of a large official caste with no competition to fear. I do not know what changes in officialism the realization of the socialist ideal might accomplish; but from our present point of view the multiplication of officials must be regarded with suspicion. If society, once socialized, were never to change again, then perhaps the State officials would be altogether useful; but if history would not end even at the coming of Socialism, then the official

<sup>1</sup> Thus Mr. Wells complains continually that many small firms are supplying milk to cities, which could be more economically and more healthily done by one organization. The issue has to be decided on its merits, but there is no special advantage in the single as opposed to the plural.

caste being hostile to further change, we shall be enslaved to the servants we have appointed. We shall have given to this caste the best brains of the community and the organized force of society; and it would be much more difficult to revolt against such a tyranny than it was against personal despotism or oligarchy. The argument of Mill is still good.

‘If every part of the business of Society which required organized concert on large and comprehensive views were in the hands of the Government, and if Government offices were universally filled by the ablest men, all the enlarged culture and practical intelligence in the country, except the purely speculative, would be concentrated in a numerous bureaucracy, to whom alone the rest of the community would look for all things—the multitude for direction and dictation in all they had to do, the able and aspiring for personal advancement.’ And again, ‘the governors would be as much the slaves of their organization and discipline as the governed are of the governors’.<sup>1</sup> Thus the civilized state would be converted into a rigid military body, not perhaps for fighting but certainly for the suppression of all further development.<sup>2</sup>

As for the various forms of Guild or Trade Socialism<sup>3</sup> in which social action is based upon

<sup>1</sup> *Liberty*, ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is obvious to Aristotle’s distinction between a state and an army: for an army makes men more similar, a state more various.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *National Guilds*, by A. R. Orage. The abrupt statement in the text is not to be considered a treatment of the whole argument, which is very valuable in (1) the proof that labour is not a commodity, and (2) in its attack on wage-slavery. But in spite of the assertion (p. 275) that the new Guilds would be quite unlike the mediaeval,

distinction in occupations, I think the final condemnation of this is written in the history of the trade guilds of the Middle Ages. Existing at first for the good of the community at large, in the end the guilds destroyed the cities in which they were powerful by pursuing private ends and excluding all competition with their methods.<sup>1</sup> Again, the interests of an Englishman are not necessarily the same as those of a Frenchman because they both happen to be shoemakers. The artificial simplification which is the weak element in every single scheme for social reconstruction is to be found here also ; and it is only made more obvious when we are told, as in certain Syndicalist writers, that no reasons need be given for remodelling the present system since 'élan' and 'intuition' are more valid guides than intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

All such criticisms and many more have been foreseen and replied to by professed Socialists, and Socialism itself is changing its form so rapidly that very soon, no doubt, these criticisms will no longer be of any value. I give them, however, rather as indications of the weakness in the socialistic ideal than as conclusive proof of error in Socialism. The admirable tendency to more social feeling and to the more social use of the results of social action may be exaggerated, to the detriment of individual and group variety ; and we may lose sight of the fact

it is admitted that they would be *monopolies*, and this gives force to my objection.

<sup>1</sup> The argument is sketched in G. Wallas's *The Great Society*. The guilds did not kill London, because other forces counteracted their selfishness ; but they killed York and Norwich.

<sup>2</sup> Sorel is, I suppose, the sanest exponent of the anti-rational prejudice in matter of Social reform.

that there is an inalienable and distinct core of personality in each man which it is the purpose of civilization to develop and not to suppress or even to subordinate.

If we could imagine an ideal at once individualistic and socialistic, such would be the effective ideal for most thinking men. For if on the one hand we tend to isolation and selfishness, on the other we tend to lose our individualities in the flood and complexity of 'The Great Society'. This Society is an organic whole ; and as in a tree the health of the cells in leaf and root is the health of the whole organism, so also in society, without distinct individuals with full, free and various development, the whole decays no less than it would without interdependence between its component parts. The Individualist is right in aiming at the variety of individuals, and so is the Socialist in impressing on all their common interest ; for the fullest development of each is to be found in the performance of his function in the life of the whole.

We have thus in Socialism all the features of a living political ideal. It is effective quite outside the ranks of professed Socialists ; it survives all the criticism and even the proved failure of socialist programmes ; for the end may survive as a hope even when the means first adopted to attain it have been shown to be ineffective. Further, like all other ideals it has its roots in a need and is born of the perception of something actually existing which is worth development. And like all other ideals also its embodiment will probably prove its deficiencies ; for there is no panacea for human needs, and other dreams will follow the realization even of the most glorious that we could now conceive.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

#### **Nature as a factor in political change.**

WE have so far seen that the motive forces in the formation of the present have been in part the conceptions which men have had of what is desirable. But before speaking of these ideals in general it is well to acknowledge the presence of the many other forces which have gone to make the present what it is and will undoubtedly transform the future whether we desire it or not. Besides the plans made by men and their attempts to gain their ends, vast natural forces are always at work with which the historian of Society and the practical politician have to deal. For a knowledge of the present political situation must involve some acquaintance with the laws of psychology, individual and social, the laws of economic change, and perhaps also the laws of geography and biology. Man is not isolated; and at every step he is influenced by the mass of different realities around him. And if for special purposes we consider man without reference to the rest of the Universe, we need always to remind ourselves that innumerable forces which we have not noticed have worked and are working to transform man himself. We may, however, neglect the larger forces at work and consider only as immediately important the effects of climate, country, or natural products. These again may be left to the economists, and we may consider only the effects of



man on man. But when we have made our last abstraction and when we have man only under our microscope, then we begin to observe that man is not really master even of his own desires. We are not free except within very narrow limits to choose what we shall desire. The natural forces, geographical, biological, or economic, which made Athens what it was, also forced upon the Athenians the desire for liberty as they conceived it. And to-day the social organization which some are so eager to transform is not altogether the result of the conscious work of individuals in the past but is in part produced by the same natural forces. Indeed, even when we have managed to direct such forces as we desire, our realized desire becomes a natural force and is to be reckoned among the other forces which transform us according to laws quite independent of our will. For suppose we manage to redistribute incomes in even a small state so that every citizen shall be economically equal, at once this situation begins to have natural results, whether foreseen or not, which are not all due to our free choice. This obviously is simply a statement that we live in a world which 'goes of itself', and it may be thought to be platitude. But it is a platitude often forgotten by the reformer, as the power of ideals is forgotten by the ultra-conservative.

There is a tendency to stability which even the revolutionary can do very little to oppose. If he speaks all day against the established order, nevertheless he cannot eat or move or clothe himself without adding his support to things as they are. Therefore there is no danger of a complete overturning of the present structure of society.

On the other hand, there is a tendency to change which even the conservative cannot resist. If he copies his forefathers most exactly, yet house and clothes decay and his food is always a little different, and the very language in which he praises the good old times, by the use of which he hopes to keep things as they are, insensibly changes its meaning even when *he* uses it. Therefore there is no danger that we shall ever be troubled for long by the same difficulties. The natural tendencies to stability and to change exist quite independently of the efforts of reformers or conservatives.

Allowing therefore for the immense number of facts over which our ideals have little or no influence, we may now turn our attention to certain general features of the ideal as we find it operative.

#### **Modern Ideals as Innovating Forces.**

The ideals which I have described in the last four chapters are all 'modern', in the sense that they are of recent birth and are more prominently at work in practical politics than are the older and more generally accepted conceptions of what is worth working for. It may be well therefore to say something of the relation of one to the other. In them we may see the division of political problems into those which deal with groups and those which deal with individuals. For, first, Nationalism and Imperialism obviously lead to a rearrangement of group relations. They are in appearance opposed. Nationalism intends the separate development of each group independently, and there is an exaggerated form of the ideal which is opposed violently to any attempt to give the

same state-system to different national groups. Imperialism intends the combined development of many different groups; and this also leads to an exaggerated conception of the need for one group to impose its own system on others. But in their true forms these two ideals are not contradictory: they are complementary conceptions of the best relationship of groups. For clearly all who are able to think of facts and not of phrases agree that each group should have its character preserved (Nationalism) but that there is great gain in a very intimate relationship under the same law and government of many different groups (Imperialism). Which groups should be united and which kept separate would then be decided by practical judgement as to the results (good and bad) of the working of that situation which we have inherited.

In the second place the two ideals of Individualism and Socialism deal with the relation of individuals. To the Individualist the less organization there is the better; for the truly free man does not require to be forced to do his duty. In Individualism we have a reflection of the English tradition; and in its exaggerated form the English prejudice against all Governments and the English suspicion of any one who is interested in what is not 'his own business'. But to 'mind one's own business' is an impossible ideal in a world in which every act has social results.

The Socialist, on the other hand, desires more organization; for the majority of men depend on institutions and not upon continual personal judgements as to what it is best to do. In Socialism we have a reflection of the German tradition; and this also is exaggerated by the German prejudice in

favour of officials and the German fear of being isolated as an individual. But institutions are cramping unless the informing spirit of individual judgement and individual action keeps them continually developing. And the result is that we are driven to say that Individualism and Socialism are complementary conceptions of the way in which the relations of individuals should be arranged. That both have a predominantly 'economic' view of political relations is due simply to the date at which both appeared; for just as in the Middle Ages political ideals were coloured by religion so in the nineteenth century politics was almost reduced to economics.<sup>1</sup> The problem of the twentieth

<sup>1</sup> This mistake is admirably corrected in Durkheim's *Division du Travail social*, cf. p. 402. 'Si la division du travail produit la solidarité, ce n'est pas seulement parce qu'elle fait de chaque individu un échangiste, comme disent les économistes; c'est qu'elle crée entre les hommes tout un système de droits et de devoirs qui les tient les uns aux autres d'une manière durable. De même que les similitudes sociales donnent naissance à un droit et à une morale qui les protègent, la division du travail donne naissance à des règles qui assurent le concours pacifique et régulier des fonctions divisées. Si les économistes ont cru qu'elle engendrait une solidarité suffisante, de quelque manière qu'elle se fit, et si, par suite, ils ont soutenu que les sociétés humaines pouvaient et devaient se résoudre en des associations purement économiques, c'est qu'ils ont cru qu'elle n'affectait que des intérêts individuels et temporaires. Par conséquent, pour estimer les intérêts en conflit et la manière dont ils doivent s'équilibrer, c'est-à-dire pour déterminer les conditions dont lesquelles l'échange doit se faire, les individus seuls sont compétents; et comme ces intérêts sont dans un perpétuel devenir, il n'y a place pour aucune réglementation permanente. Mais une telle conception est, de tous points, inadéquate aux faits. La division du travail ne met pas en présence des individus, mais des fonctions sociales. Or, la société est intéressée au jeu de ces

century is to transform its political ideal by reference to other, non-economic, interests of man in society. And while that is being done it becomes increasingly apparent that we must organize more adequately (Socialism) and give freer play to individual ability (Individualism). For the State is tyrannical which is not held together by the free individual sentiment of all its citizens; and the State is a confusion if its organization is felt to be a mere inheritance and not a definite new means to reach the new conceptions of what is valuable in life.

#### Ancient Ideals—their Present Influence.

But other ideals besides those of recent birth are at work in changing the present situation. The achievements of the past are the basis for change, and, as I have argued, the meaning of such achievements may be more fully understood by considering what men desired than by a record of battles or great men or group habits. Every age therefore may be supposed to have contributed something to our political inheritance not only in its achievement but in its ideal; and if the ideal has been the soul of the achievement, on the other hand the accomplished fact has always shown certain deficiencies in the conception of what is desirable. The ideal itself has seemed to be corroded by being

*dernières; suivant qu'elles concourent régulièrement ou non, elle sera saine ou malade. Son existence en dépend donc, et d'autant plus étroitement qu'elles sont plus divisées. C'est pourquoi elle ne peut les laisser dans un état d'indétermination, et d'ailleurs elles se déterminent d'elles-mêmes. Ainsi se forment ces règles dont le nombre s'accroît à mesure que le travail se divise et dont l'absence rend la solidarité organique ou impossible ou imparfaite.'*

embodied, and some have spoken as if the ideal itself was untouched by the limitations of the political programme which has been its expression. I have preferred, however, not to give that vaguer meaning to the word ideal which such a statement would imply; for then the ideal would simply indicate the indefinite desire for something better. It is not merely 'something better' but a definite state conceived as better which has really moved men to action; and the political programme which has resulted has often shown that the state conceived was not as desirable as was at first imagined.

The basis then for our present action is the ideal, partly achieved and partly, even when achieved, seen to be deficient; but something of the original conception survives and gives us the motive for further action. What survives in this sense is the ancient ideal, corrected and modified, developed in various ways, but still active among us as it was among our ancestors. A civilized race is one which not only accepts the achievements of the past but is moved by the ideals which have been shown by experience to be of value; and although some states in the relationship of individuals and groups which were once thought admirable are proved undesirable, there are other situations long ago conceived to be good which, in spite of failure and deficiency, still continue to be so judged.

#### Development of Ideals.

I do not suppose that Liberty or Order will ever seem undesirable, and therefore some ideals may seem to be immortal; but even they are immortal only at the cost of being transformed from time to time. And when one looks back into the past the

liberty for which men laboured in Athens seems strangely different from that which we now desire. We may think of it as only so different as the child is different from the grown man; or it may be that the difference is as great as that between a father and his child. In either case it is clear that among our inheritances from the past no improvements of our machinery can show any changes so great as the changes that come over the desires of men.

This then is in part the meaning of the word development when it is applied to political ideals. The essential needs of man have not altogether changed in the short period to which I have referred since Athens first won liberty for herself: but these needs have been felt in different ways. Thus, I suppose, with the two great words Order and Liberty we may make a record of all history, since they express the two opposite desires which complete the ideal conceived by every age. But Order is developed as Unity and Imperialism and Socialism, and Liberty appears in different ages as Nationalism or Individualism. And each new child of Liberty or Order itself grows through many forms and gives birth to other children. Thus Revolutionary Rights give birth to Individualism as well as to Socialism.

There is development and perhaps progress, the laws of this development can be discovered and from them judgement may be passed on the tendencies of the present: but the law is not a simple one of two opposites being always reconciled in a single compromise, and the problem is so complex that a correct judgement on present tendencies is not easily made.

The connection between different ideals can only be understood by the study of historical fact, and no general law of Logic or 'Philosophy of Mind' will show how, for example, Athenian Liberty is connected with Roman Order.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes two complementary ideals are contemporaneous, sometimes the individualizing or separating ideal follows, sometimes it precedes the grouping or uniting ideal. The order of historical sequence is not that of logical opposition and synthesis.

General statements can, however, be made, and one such as to the nature of the ideal in history I have attempted to make, the truth of which is dependent upon the facts to which I have referred. In so far as such general statements constitute a ground for expecting them to be true of the future, in that far we may speak of an historical law of ideals; but this law will then be only a statement of what has occurred and will contain no 'necessity' in the older sense of the word, in as far as necessity was supposed to govern the future. The evidence with which I have dealt would not disprove the possibility of entirely new development of political ideal and practice. We may, for all I know, have reached what mathematicians would call a point of discontinuity in the curve of development; but even then the past would govern our future not only as an achievement but as a surviving ideal.

<sup>1</sup> The Romans also desired Liberty and the Athenians Order. The distinction that I have made is one of elements in present experience and those elements I have connected with historical events set out in order of time; but although some ideals (e.g. Nationalism) could not have come before others (e.g. Revolutionary Rights), I do not think that one can say, looking forward, that Nationalism, for example, *had* to follow,



It will be noticed, also, that I have spoken of ideals and not of one ideal, because of the definite meaning I have given to the word. In a sense the state desired is one, but it is not therefore simple ; and even if there is a fundamental agreement between Socialists and Individualists, Nationalists and Imperialists, as there is some common desire in the hope for Liberty or for Order, yet the distinct elements in the state desired must be kept separate or we shall become sentimental Utopians, such as are unwilling to disagree with others because they do not wish to think out clearly what they themselves desire.

#### **Political Issues and Political Practice.**

It remains to be said that in reasoning about political facts two questions have been kept distinct. One is 'What in the present situation is right and what is wrong ?' and the other is 'What is the remedy for wrong or the means for developing the right ?' The study of politics should increase our capacity for diagnosing social disease or recognizing social good.<sup>1</sup> The statement of facts must be accompanied by ethical judgement, and we must be able to see that what at first sight seems evil may turn out to be good, or what at first sight seems good may be really evil. The ethical judgement needs training just as much as the capacity for observing or stating facts, and often a good statistician or an honest recorder of the

<sup>1</sup> Since party-politics is based on suggesting remedies the tendency in practical politics is pathological. The successful speaker generally says more about the evils than about the good in the present situation.

existing circumstances is quite incompetent to judge social good and evil. All sorts of ready platitudes pass current for such judgements since few have any real grasp of the test of events or acts according to their far-off consequences. Ethical judgements of value are not inspired or intuitive : they are correct or incorrect according to certain evidence. Now in answering the question 'What is wrong ?' the opinion of the majority is a useful guide ; for the patient is often the most skilful exponent of his suffering. But the case is different when we wish to discover a remedy.

In answer to the question 'What is the remedy for social disease ?' the opinion of the majority is of only secondary importance ; for the suggesting of remedies is the office of specialists.<sup>1</sup> These are the physicians of the body politic. They must suggest the remedy by reference to their more general study of political issues ; for the patient can very seldom suggest the remedy for his own pain. And yet even here the expression of opinion by the majority seems to be necessary—this is what makes some form of democracy essential to

<sup>1</sup> I am supposing that professional politicians are specialists who know the subject, and I think it is true of England, Germany, France, and Italy ; even in America the ignorance of political philosophy among professional politicians is less crass than the ignorance of the voting population. Or we may suppose that the members of a Cabinet are the real specialists in suggesting remedies (cf. Graham Wallas, *The Great Society*, p. 276).

It may also be supposed that Government officials are the real specialists since they consider all the evidence and decide on remedies independently of party-prejudice (op. cit., p. 285). But the caste-mind and the official spirit make the real issues to be decided difficult to see, and official decisions are worse than those of Parliament.

civilization. For when the specialist has suggested a remedy and it has been tried, it remains for the patient to say whether he feels better. In a benevolent despotism the despot may, for the good of the people, administer social remedies and the patient may have no power of saying if the remedy is killing him. It is so also in any rule by an aristocracy, even the most intelligent—the whole of society may suffer through not being able effectively to complain against the medicines administered for its benefit. Here also then the opinion of the majority is valuable as the best practical statement of political judgements.

But the problems being complex no one remedy or panacea is likely to be effective ; and the study of ideals will suggest how many different evils may exist and how many different treatments may be necessary. With a fuller historical knowledge some modern plans for social reform would have been seen to have already failed long ago,<sup>1</sup> and other remedies would be suggested which have never been given an adequate trial.

Now the number and variety of answers to the question 'What is the remedy ?' give a reasonable ground for the existence of *political parties*. It seems good that this remedy should be advocated by one body of specialists and this other by another ; and although much may be said against the narrowness of 'party', exactly the same may be said against any body of specialists who are not completely agreed on a complex issue. Abstractly it may be possible to conceive of specialists who would

<sup>1</sup> This is the case with Syndicalism, which, as Mr. Graham Wallas points out (*The Great Society*, p. 327), was tried and failed in the Guild System of mediaeval cities.

know everything; but we have not even found these in the simpler issues of physical disease.<sup>1</sup>

I do not say that every political party has a reasonable remedy to suggest; I say only that such a suggestion would be a good ground for the existence of a party.<sup>2</sup> Until the remedy is applied the party may well continue to advocate it, and its various members may well continue to point out its advantages. Doubtless there is the further danger of the doctor's maintaining himself on the illness of the patient. It may pay a party-politician to neglect the interest of the patient in view of the position of his clique; but I see no reason to suppose that political specialists are more dishonest than any other specialists, although I admit that there is more room for quackery in politics since the problems are more complex and our ignorance more complete than in the case of medicine.

It would follow from this that parties should be more flexible, should exist for advocating one principle only, and that there should perhaps be many parties each in existence for a short period. But party-tradition is also reasonable, in so far as most partial remedies are applications of a few general principles. On this ground we may explain the existence of *party-government* which involves the opposition between two parties only; for it is clear that all political remedies for social evil can

<sup>1</sup> All attacks which I have seen on the party system seem to imply that we know what should be done but that party-politicians will not do it. But I am not so confident that any one knows so much, and I am absolutely certain that the opponents of the party system do not.

<sup>2</sup> A party may conceivably exist by saying 'Nothing is wrong'; in which case no remedy would be necessary.

be reduced either to the principle of Order or to that of Liberty. Thus the ideals of which I have traced the history are among the formative forces even in the practical politics of to-day, and in spite of the deficiencies of our political machine some reasons may be given for reforming it rather than abolishing it. Indeed, the disagreements upon which parties and party government flourish may well be advantages for preserving criticism and opposing the dogmatism of any clique.

The demand for specialists to suggest remedies has led among other things to Cabinet government, and this is dangerous just so far as, the Cabinet being the doctors, the patients may be refused any power of rejecting the medicines prescribed or even saying that they are no better for the use of them. The power to express disagreement is valuable.

The fact remains that, in spite of disagreement due to a different view of the facts or to different suggestions of remedy, there is a general agreement on many issues ; and it would be a great disadvantage if in the heat of party-controversy we lost sight of these fundamental principles. The practical or professional politician is more concerned with the disputed issues than with such principles ; but to the majority in a democracy they are more important than this or that piece of legislation, and even the professional politician will give no force to his party-programme unless he draws such force from the fundamental principles upon which all civilized men are agreed.

As instances of such principles I may cite the conception that all government should be for the benefit of all the governed. In default of this it is generally admitted that government should be for

the benefit at least of the majority. Such is a principle with respect to the relation of individual to individual. And as for the relation of group to group, it would be generally admitted that apart from the common needs of their common humanity, each group is likely to be benefited in a different way. This is the general principle of regionalism or local government. Many other such fundamental principles could be found ; and it is most important that those with political power, however limited, should not lose sight of them in the attention to details during elections or in the forgetfulness of all political issues which comes over the majority when no election is pending.

Of politics in general it remains to be said that the situation at present cannot be regarded as altogether admirable ; and even if a few are able to admire it, they also must consider in what direction they would desire it to change, for change it will. There is no help for it. Every age must labour at the making of ideals ; unless we are to return to the blind acquiescence in natural force which, although it seems to be advocated by a modern philosophy, is hardly more than a return to primitive barbarism. But to make the ideal and to labour for it, knowledge is as requisite as good intentions. It may be that men and women of good will are most admirable, but they are dangerous if they are ignorant. And in political action knowledge is even more required nowadays than good intentions. It is a wide issue and I cannot here discuss it ; but one might reasonably prefer to be guided by intelligent villains each seeking his own interest, rather than by well-intentioned fools who continually cared for the interest of

others ; for no man can seek his own real interest without in some way attaining that of others, and no man can make up by good wishes for his ignorance of facts. Political education is what is most needed ; political purity may be left to take care of itself.

# APPENDIX I

## LIMITS OF THE SUBJECT

THE subject is so closely related to others that it seems necessary to define its limits. The merely verbal definition is not enough; for the problem is not to discover in what sense we shall decide to use the sound 'politics', but to distinguish one body of facts from another. It is necessary, therefore, to point out the general body of facts to which what I have called Politics refers, and next to distinguish among those facts the smaller class called Ideals.

### A. Politics.

Politics is the study of the relations existing between individuals and between groups.<sup>1</sup> It is concerned with law and government as the organization of individual relations or those of trade groups; and with peace and war in so far as these are changes in the relationship of such groups as Nations or States.

It involves a knowledge of facts, as does every portion of the study of human relationship; and since no present fact is isolated in time, some history must be introduced. But it is primarily concerned with moral judgements on these facts, which cannot be valuable without special knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> I need not point out that 'to be interested in Politics' may be to be concerned with facts or with the *study* of such facts.



morality. The historian as such has no right to pass moral judgements, but does so only in as far as he has inherited or accidentally arrived at certain moral criteria.<sup>1</sup> Thus Politics is, primarily, a science of moral judgement on the facts of relationship between individuals and groups.

Politics is closely connected with Economics,<sup>2</sup> but the economist need not be a good political thinker; for Economics deals only with the value of work or of commodities, and Politics involves an interest also in such desires as that for liberty, which cannot be supposed to have an altogether economic value. There are many who would make of Economics the ultimate explanation of all human action; but, in the first place, it is unlikely that any one science will explain all varieties of action, and in the second, if the field of investigation is made too large, Economics will lose all its quality as an exact science. It is impossible to suppose that economic want is the only motive force in history; or, for example, to suppose that the desire for liberty or the programme of nationalists can be explained altogether in economic terms. Liberty or even Virtue may have a cash value. It may, in some unknown situation, pay to be honest; but even so, one could not explain all that Liberty, or Virtue, or Order, or even Nationalism,

<sup>1</sup> This is obviously the case with Treitschke, who, as an historian, claimed authority for moral judgements which are simply primitive. The English readers may find them in *Selections from Treitschke's Lectures on Politics*, translated by A. L. Gowans, or in *The Political Thought of Heinrich von Treitschke*, by H. W. C. Davis (Constable).

<sup>2</sup> Originally, as in Mill, &c., the two are confused. The very phrase 'Political Economy' indicates a confusion. Cf. Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 3.

means by referring only to cash-values. The relations discussed in Economics then are those of trade or profession—such as may roughly be classed as industrial; but political relations are those of law and government in general.

Politics therefore is different from Economics in being concerned with the organization of Society for the purpose of obtaining a life which is fine in quality.<sup>1</sup> Or if the phrase is preferable, the interest of the political thinker is the maintenance and development of civilized life, and that not chiefly, and certainly not exclusively, with reference to the mere supply of material want upon which all civilization must depend.

Religion also in its present state is concerned with social organization, at any rate since it has been confused with morality. But the relation of man to man and of group to group in religious organization is of a different kind from that called political. The exact difference between a State and a Church it is not necessary to discuss. If we identify the two, then we destroy one or the other; if we keep them distinct, it is difficult to distinguish their interests. But for my present purpose political facts are those which are involved in the betterment of human life, called the progress of civilization, material, intellectual, and emotional. If a Church is concerned only with this and not

<sup>1</sup> This is simply to adapt Aristotle's phrase that the State exists for 'life' in order to move forward to 'the good life' (*Pol.* i. 2. 8). Again, 'the State exists for the sake of a good life and not for life only' (*ibid.* iii. 9. 6). I need hardly point out how different this conception is from that of Treitschke, for example, to whom the State seems to exist for the *aimless* exercise of 'power' (cf. *Selections*, p. 11).

with any 'other' life, then I should be inclined to call its business political.

Lastly, there is a study of social relations called Sociology, of which Politics is one branch or department; for in Politics we refer to civilized communities living under settled government, and in Sociology all forms of human association are part of the subject-matter. Undoubtedly the primitive forces which make and transform early associations continue to be active in political communities,<sup>1</sup> but these are not *peculiar* to political life.

Politics therefore must be distinguished from Economics, Ecclesiasticism, and Sociology. It is *the study of civilized organization for temporal benefit in other than merely material needs.*<sup>2</sup> Political facts may be divided into two kinds: first, the relation of man to man, and secondly, the relation of group to group. In the most general sense Politics is concerned with the relation of man to man in civilized society; but we find such society organized into distinct groups (families, townships, regions, nationalities, and states). The separation of the two kinds of political facts is, of course, abstract and for the purpose of study only; since we should not altogether neglect the nature of the group in discussing the relation of the individuals within it, nor should we forget that individuals are real when we speak of the intercourse between States. But we may hypothetically separate the two issues,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. McDougall, *Social Psychology*, for such forces as Sex, &c.

<sup>2</sup> This definition is intended to imply a wider reference than that merely to Law and Government, since a great part of Social Organization is not embodied in Law or in Government.

and discuss first the relation of individual to individual and, next, the relation of group to group. Under the first heading, if we were discussing institutions, would appear the facts of contract or individual crime or the distribution of wealth. These all may be considered apart from the peculiarities of national or state circumstances, for there are general principles which apply to all men in every group. On the other hand, we must recognize as political facts the existence of groups either of free association (Trade Unions, &c.) or of natural growth (Families, Nations, &c.); and the study of the relation of such groups to one another forms another part of politics.

Knowledge of such facts may be again of two kinds—it may be ‘scientific’ or it may be ethical; that is to say, it may involve only a statement of facts which have existed or do exist, and in that sense it is descriptive although we may also classify and compare. That is the purpose of *Political Science*,<sup>1</sup> whether the principle of development be introduced or not, so long as there is no question of ‘progress’ or any comparison of facts as good and bad. But political facts may also be studied with a view to comparing their ethical values; and in this case we should be concerned not merely with the question whether such facts did or do exist, but also with the question whether or not it was or is *good* that they should so exist. And this is the purpose of *Political Philosophy*,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The distinctions, &c., here made are partly due to Sidgwick, see the *Elements of Politics*, ch. i, and the Introduction to *The Development of European Polity*.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Sidgwick, *El. Pol.*, p. 12. ‘The study of Politics as I shall treat it is concerned primarily with constructing

which implies a knowledge of what ought to be or of an ethical standard. That there is such a standard and that it may roughly be described in Utilitarian terms, I take for granted; since in spite of much philosophical criticism, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' remains the best single and popular, if inexact, rendering of what most men desire who are concerned at all with political issues. But the conception would have to be much more closely defined if one were concerned chiefly with the discovery of what ought to be the situation in a civilized community. Here, however, I need only make it clear that the existence of some standard of what ought to be is one among many political facts. Even if political philosophy is the discussion of such a standard, the discovery of what standards have been accepted<sup>1</sup> and of how they govern action would be important quite apart from the ultimate comparison of them all or the suggestion as to a supreme or Utopian Society. We have therefore as material for the use of reasoning in this matter: (1) the relation of individuals, (2) the relation of groups, (3) the succession of events, and (4) the influence of ethical standards, and doubtless many other facts which may be intimately related with these.

on the basis of certain psychological premises the system of relations which *ought* to be established among the persons governing and between them and the governed in a society of civilized men in the last stage which has yet been reached in the progress of civilization.' It will be noticed that in what follows, in spite of my debt to Sidgwick, I have not given such prominence to the idea of *government* as he has. That is only one of the many relations between civilized men.

<sup>1</sup> This is the subject of Freeman's *Comparative Politics*; but I have not dealt with standards which *have* existed and are no longer effective.

**B. Ideals.**

Such are the facts of politics ; but among the various facts are some which are called *ideals* : that is to say, the things or states desired, which would imply a modification of law or government, or, in group relations, a modification of existing circumstances.

Positively therefore an ideal is, first, a plan in an individual mind. We must rule out of exact history such phrases as 'the crowd mind' or 'the collective mind' although they may be valuable for rhetoric and poetry. When several people desire the same thing, their ideal is one, but their minds are still distinct. When several people in a crowd behave differently from the way in which each would behave when by himself, we must not suppose that any new Spirit or Mind is present ; for it is to be explained by the different circumstances in which each man then finds himself. He is influenced by the presence of the crowd, but he remains himself.<sup>1</sup>

But in simple fact *no* individual is isolated. Every man is influenced by some others, even if he is not at the moment in a crowd. The bare fact that the house next door is inhabited has its part in the formation of each individual's character, knowledge, and desires ; and thus there is hardly any permanent ideal, hardly any desirable state, which moves the separate individual. We are all helped or hindered by our neighbours. An

<sup>1</sup> The proof is in McDougall's *Social Psychology*, in opposition to the wild statements and uncriticized metaphor of such writers as Le Bon.

ideal is therefore a conception of what would satisfy such a want as can only be felt by many men influenced one by the other. I omit here all transient wants giving rise to momentary ideals and all poetic visions of better things which have not actually been understood or felt as motive forces in remodelling any existing situation. The statement of the ideal in literature is, of course, always personal, but some such statements are expressions of common sentiment and others of private enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup>

Of ideals there are many kinds. For men may follow an artistic or a religious or an athletic ideal. They may be impressed with the necessity for town-planning, no longer believing in the natural beauty of the city jungle. Or they may all agree to go to church on Sundays in order to feel more exalted. Or they may be undergraduates to their dying day. But among ideals there are some which are political.

A political ideal is dependent upon a political dissatisfaction ; and by that I mean the perception that there is some maladjustment in the relations of men living together in different stable communities. It is found that A, B, and C have no power of going where D, E, and F are, or of speaking to them on equal terms ; and thus a general conception arises not only in the minds of A, B, and C,

<sup>1</sup> I have therefore neglected such 'individual' ideals as are expressed in More's *Utopia* ; for although they are due to social causes and have had social effects, they never were motive forces in actual politics. On the other hand, Dante's *de Monarchia* expresses, I think, a common ideal ; but I confess the distinction between the two kinds of statement is dependent upon a criticism of the actual text in each case, and the history of its effect.

but sometimes also in the mind of D, E, or F, that it would be better for all if each were in some sense the equal of the other. Or again, the group M, N, P finds itself oppressed by the group W, X, Y, Z; and it occurs to both that each would gain if each had free play for its own characteristic abilities.

A political ideal then has generally two distinct elements, in so far as politics deals with individuals associated together in groups. For we may consider at one moment the relation of individuals to one another and at another the relation of group to group. Thus liberty involves both the independence of one individual as against the power of another, and also the mutual independence of groups of individuals; so that the political leader has often to emphasize, first, opposition to foreign aggression, and then defiance of internal oppression by a caste or an individual tyrant. These two quite distinct ideas together make up the ideal of political liberty; and we may thus treat them as constituent elements of one whole, admitting, of course, that to divide them is to take apart what is really one movement. The arbitrary division of ideals, which has often been the result of party government, has sometimes resulted in opposing the desire for internal freedom to the desire for group independence. Thus one party may speak as if true liberty did not imply any care for preserving national independence, and the other party may just as foolishly speak as if internal oppression of caste by caste or individual by individual were not a real danger. In the name of liberty one party will have nothing but internal reform, and in the same name the other party will have nothing



but national defence. True liberty implies both ; and if we deal with the two elements separately, it should not perpetuate in reasoning a division already too prominent in party traditions, but should only make it possible to examine more easily the one ideal in its different phases. The change in a political situation, in so far as it is due to an ideal at all, is sometimes worked by a partial or limited conception of what is desirable, sometimes by a complex and intricate desire involving both readjustment of groups and the reform of the relations between individuals. The ideal in its full meaning is never a motive power among the many ; it is always embodied, as it were, in some definite and limited idea of satisfaction for some almost trivial want. Thus the great man may work for liberty, but the small man, governed unconsciously by the same ideal, thinks he is working only for ability to sell his vegetables at a higher price.

The farther back we go in history the less intricate seem the desires which govern men. With respect to Athens and Rome it is not necessary to treat at length and separately the theory of the relation of groups and that of the relation of individuals within the groups. Athenian liberty does indeed imply both the independence of Athens and the individualism of the Athenians ; Roman Order means both the suzerainty of Rome in an organized world and the 'orders' of her citizens. But as civilization progresses and the relations between men and groups of men become more complex, those who work for internal liberty are quite distinct from those who work for National freedom and sometimes the two parties are opposed. Thus

in dealing with ideals of a more recent growth it is necessary to distinguish those which concern individuals from those which concern groups.

One may express abruptly some of the implications in all this. Restricted as above, the practice of politics will be only one among many functions of the civilized man in society; and it will not necessarily be the highest. Therefore the supreme institution of political life, the State, is *not sovereign*, in the sense that when a man's allegiance is divided between what he owes the State and what he owes to some other social institution it does not follow that State-allegiance *must* be recognized as supreme.<sup>1</sup>

All traditional philosophy of the State implies that the State is complete in itself. But even with respect to purely political life or functions, the modern State is not economically or politically independent of other States. Therefore again it is *not sovereign* in the Renaissance sense. Plato and Aristotle regarded the State as self-sufficing; and it was partly true of the States they knew. But to continue to regard inter-State relations as a mere appendix to the discussion of law and government is to perpetuate an obsolete idea. It is not true that the essence of the State is independence. All States are now continuously and normally in contact, and the nature of each is affected by the nature of others.

As for ideals, these are of importance for group-

<sup>1</sup> The above was written before I had read Mr. G. D. H. Cole's paper on 'Conflicting Social Obligations' (*Proc. Arist. Soc.*, February 1915), which partly expresses the same idea; but he maintains that there is a sovereign society above the State.

morality. The morality of a man acting for his group should not be lower than when acting for himself; and again, every member of a group, in so far as it is a moral association, should be unwilling to benefit by any act of his representatives which he would be ashamed to do for himself.

## APPENDIX II

### REASONING IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is implied in what has been said that reasoning is of importance in political development, since I have supposed that the ideal is in some sense the result of rational process. The state desired is a state conceived, and its conception is due in part at least to the process called reasoning. There is, however, a modern tendency to decry reasoning in general and in particular with reference to politics. Bergson is a convenient name to use as a symbol for what I take to be a not uncommon attitude in general philosophy. He himself may not disdain the reasoning process, but his followers do; and his language at least gives colour to the idea that there is some more exalted method of attaining a knowledge of reality. Such an attitude is opposed to what is stated in this book, but the general issue is not necessarily involved. In the more restricted reference to politics the same tendency to undervalue reasoning appears in the works of Sorel, McDougall, and Graham Wallas.<sup>1</sup> I do not mean, of course, that any of these are so unwarrantably dogmatic as Le Bon; but there is, none the less, a certain eagerness in repudiating the too 'rational' man of Aristotle and Plato, of Kant, Fichte and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wallas has recanted in *The Great Society* what seems to have been the chief thesis of *Human Nature in Politics*. Mr. McDougall has, of course, not gone so far as Sorel.

Hegel, of Spencer and Mill. It is clear that the philosophical tradition gives too high a place to reasoning.<sup>1</sup>

The question is how political change takes place. The older philosophers no doubt exaggerated the effectiveness of reasoning in all such changes ; but the newer writers have inclined to an opposite extreme ; and, without claiming to represent any compromise, what has been said above must be held to imply the corrected view of the effects of rational process in changing life.

For it seems that much of the modern disdain for reasoning is due to mistaken belief as to the nature of reasoning ; and I shall therefore attempt to say in what sense of the word I maintain that reasoning has produced ideals and thus affected political development.

It sounds trivial to say so, but it must first be asserted that reasoning is not logic. The process itself is quite independent of the description of it ; and even if logic is quite futile, reasoning would not therefore be in any way proved to be ineffective. But many writers, especially of the Pragmatist School, appear to think that an attack on logic is likely to dethrone reasoning. Reasoning, however, may still be a method of arriving at truth even if the descriptive laws of induction or deduction are not valid.

Thus, when it is said that reasoning is effective in political development, we do not necessarily

<sup>1</sup> As philosophers have said that common men make Gods in their own image, so now we say that philosophers have made Man in their own image. The 'rational Man' is doubtless a splendid hypothesis based largely on the personal habits and interests of the great thinkers.

imply that any of the laws of logic can be observed in operation, although one may be inclined to suspect that too much has been made of the mistakes or limitations in the description of reasoning given by logicians.

In the second place, reasoning is not argument. The usual method of controversy, where politics is managed by parties, is argument as distinct from reasoning; since an argument is an attempt to find excuses for a view which is accepted before these excuses are discovered, and this is a natural method when a party or a tradition prescribes the programme and the speaker or writer has only to maintain it. Argument is the method of a lawyer maintaining a case or a theologian defending a creed. The lawyer is not concerned to discover whether his case is just or the position of his client equitable: he has only to make the best show he can for his client by discovering as much evidence as possible in his favour and disregarding or destroying the rest. If the case is just, so much the better; but even if it is, its success depends upon the skill of the advocate for using evidence. The position is accepted before the defence is considered, and evidence which may be used against it is treated as only objections to be answered.

Again, the theologian does not set out to discover a new truth. He already 'knows' the truth, or rather he accepts as true what is in his peculiar tradition; and he then attempts to find arguments to prove it true. The conclusion is in his mind before he considers the premises; he knows the goal to be reached, he is only in doubt as to the best method of reaching it. All evidence against his creed is a mere 'difficulty' to be surmounted, if it

is not an empty subtlety of the evil one. Thus he does not really discuss any evidence, for the evidence against his view is not treated as evidence at all. Exactly the same may generally be said of the party politician. He has a case to maintain and he looks round for arguments in its favour. But this is not reasoning. For reasoning is a discovery : it is an advance into an unknown and unexplored country : it is an experiment in the dark, a reaching out, as we may vulgarly put it, to turn on the light. At the beginning of the process of reasoning nothing appears but the evidence to be dealt with ; at the end this evidence has forced us into a position never before occupied. And so argument is a parody of reasoning : for it exactly reverses the reasoning process. It is often only the ghost of dead reasoning, since it is literally some other person's reasoning haunting the graveyards of dead ideas which many call their minds. I say nothing against argument, since it is very useful that, if you wish to hold an opinion, you should discover even the ghost of a proof for it : this will make you both a pleasanter companion because less dogmatic, and a more civilized citizen because you will probably understand your own opinion better. Long may argument continue : it is in some nations the **only** substitute for conversation.

Philosophers, however, should not condemn reasoning because of the deficiencies of argument as a method of reaching truth.<sup>1</sup> Reasoning is half insight, and the other half analysis and synthesis : the evidence, be it ever so well analysed and classified, is useless to any one without insight.

<sup>1</sup> I confess that this seems to me to be done in M. Bergson's *L'Évolution créatrice*.

And one may suspect that no man is altogether without insight although many neglect to use it. But reasoning is not to be described in terms of anything else ; and if a man does not know at all what the process may be which I have so far distinguished from argument, no further words will be of any use. One must have used reasoning to understand what it is ; as a process it is unique, and one could no more explain it to a person who had never used it than one could explain colour to a blind man. It is first therefore to be understood by distinction from argument, and that involves that it must be itself experienced. But reasoning is a process in common use. It is the method that gives power to any business transaction which is not a mere continuance of an antiquated tradition. It is the method by which communication is made every day easier and our knowledge of natural forces more useful. There is enough of it for all men to understand what it is ; the only trouble is that with respect to some subjects it is not commonly used. But in all subjects it is the process by which we discover what we did not know before. The general laws concerning its use are to be found in *Logic*,<sup>1</sup> and these I need not here describe. We shall in any case recognize that, like all psychological processes, reasoning has typical forms and pathological varieties.

<sup>1</sup> I do not imply that any present *Logic* does give a sufficient account of reasoning. I say only that to give such an account is the task of *Logic*.



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